

JOE DANTE'S GREMLINS

Behind-The-Scenes Interviews From:

INDIANA JONES And THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

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FANTASTIC FILMS

The Magazine of Imaginative Media

#40

STAR TREK III

Director **LEONARD NIMOY** Interviewed



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- **MEL (Mad Max) GIBSON** Mutinies On **THE BOUNTY**
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FANTASTIC FILMS: USPS 561-650 (ISSN 0275-7043) July 1984 Vol. 7 No. 4. Published six times per year by FANTASTIC FILMS MAGAZINE, INC. 2020 Lincoln Park West, Chicago IL 60614. Second class postage. Rates paid at Chicago, IL and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send form 3576 to FANTASTIC FILMS MAGAZINE, P.O. Box 245 Mt. Morris, IL 61054. Subscriptions: in the U.S. \$15.00 per year. Canadian: \$17.25 per year. Foreign: \$23.00 per year. Printed in the USA.

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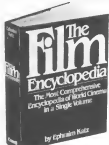
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Supergirl

The Movie

**19 Year-Old
Newcomer
Helen Slater
Soars Into
Adventure
As Supergirl**



CINEMA SNEAK

Advance production information and first photos from forthcoming

Who is faster than a speeding bullet? More powerful than able to leap, etc. Superman? Wrong! Equality of the sexes now exists in outer space and Supergirl is on her way to earth to declare war on crime.

Alexander and Ilya Salikind, who brought us *Superman I, II and III*, along with a host of other movies, including the *Three Musketeers*, have now produced *Supergirl*, due out later this summer.

Supergirl—Kara to her parents on another planet, Linda Lee to us earthlings since she appeared in *Action Comics* in the 1960s—is in fact a first cousin of Superman. She and other surviving Kryptonians now live on a tiny chip of what was once the planet Krypton. However, a failed experiment conducted by young Kara, involving one of the planetoid's two great power sources (an Omegahedron) resulted in the loss of the precious power unit into space.

With only half its energy core remaining, Argo City's inhabitants, including Kara and her family, will soon wither and die, unless the Omegahedron can be brought back. This grave mission sends Kara on a journey to earth.

In a twist from the Superman movies, the roles of evil incarnate have been placed in the hands of women. Kara's worst enemy is Selena, played by the beautiful Faye Dunaway (remember *Mommy Dearest*?). Her sidekick, the shrewish Bianca, is Brenda Vaccaro.

The ensuing battle is no cat fight. Selena unleashes an invisible monster to crush Supergirl in a spectacle of surprises and promised mind-boggling special effects. (We hear both Supergirl and Selena will free-fly, no harnesses.)

The character Supergirl debuted in the May 1958 issue of *Action Comics*. Placed in Midvale Orphanage under the name Linda Lee, Supergirl served as Superman's "secret weapon." Her very existence was unknown to the world until February 1962, when "The World's Greatest Heroine" revealed her existence both to the world and to her new adoptive parents, the Danvers.

Supergirl continued to appear as Superman's companion feature in *Action Comics* until May 1969. Since then she has twice appeared in a magazine of her own—once from 1972 to 1974, and again starting in 1982. Her stories have been read by millions of readers, and the premiere of the Supergirl movie will celebrate the 25th anniversary of her creation.

Like Clark Kent, Linda Lee grows up "undercover" in the Midwest. This All-American girl is vivacious, friendly, bright, a good student and a good friend to those in need.

But like Superman, she secretly possesses those traits most important in a super-heroine: super strength, x-ray vision, invulnerability, advanced mental prowess and the awesome ability to fly. Like her



PHOTOS: Above left, Supergirl (Helen Slater) flies to the rescue. (Right, top down, Supergirl confronts Selena (Faye Donaway) in her private hideaway. Supergirl soars above a forest terrain. Helen Slater reaches her down-to-earth Supergirl smile. Photos © Copyright 1984 Warner Bros.



ing attractions

cousin, she is sworn to fight evil and injustice throughout the world.

And like Christopher Reeve was in 1976, the actress who plays Supergirl is a new face to movie audiences. Helen Slater, 19, makes her feature film debut in *Supergirl*. She is a graduate of Manhattan's High School of the Performing Arts (made famous in *Fame*), and the daughter of a public broadcasting executive. This blonde, all-American-looking actress, who spent many summers working at the Hampton Playhouse in Long Island, sings, acts, and writes both lyrics and music. For the role of cinema's first teenaged super-heroine, Slater was selected from over several hundred candidates interviewed by the Salkinds.

The other principals in the cast are very well known. The leader of Argo City, Zaltar, is played by six-time Oscar nominee Peter O'Toole. Mia Farrow and Simon Ward portray Kara's parents. Marc McClure is back for a fourth time as Jimmy Olsen, the inquisitive, accident-prone Daily Planet news photographer. The cast is rounded out by Hart Bochner, Peter Cook and Maureen Teety.

Principal photography was completed in August 1983 after four straight months of filming on foreign locations and at Pinewood Studios in London. Ilya Salkind served as executive producer of the film, which was produced by Timothy Burrell and directed by Jeannot Szwarc from a screenplay by David Odell.

—Beverly Wood

KEEP WRITER REJECTS

I enjoyed your interview with Michael Mann. Gave me a few chuckles. Quite the pompous ass, isn't he? Especially in light of the universally hostile reactions of the critics and the confused indifference of the public to the film, not to mention the millions upon millions it lost for Paramount.

I can't say he and Paramount don't deserve it. The studio let him strip the novel of all the aspects that had made it a successful book, and then let him add a monster that looked precisely like what it was: a man in a silly-looking rubber suit. He took a novel that kept hordes of people up and reading until four or five in the morning—and I have plenty of letters from readers telling me just that—and made it into a confused, boring movie.

It was beautifully filmed—I'll give him that, he's a great technician—but it offered precious few moments of horror and wonder. It elicited anger and disappointment in those who had read the book, and dazed confusion in those who hadn't. There was no mood, no coherent plot, no character developed anywhere near the point where the viewer could give a damn about him or her. Michael Mann can set up a shot beautifully, but he doesn't know how to direct people. The movie has no heart.

Perhaps Paramount will eventually forgive him for the money he lost them, perhaps Scott Glenn will forgive him for making him talk like a robot, perhaps Jürgen Prochnow will forgive him for the terrible dialogue he had to say. I know I'll never forgive him for the cinematic travesty he made with the same title as my novel. As far as I'm concerned, a film version of *THE KEEP* has yet to be made.

Regards,
F. Paul Wilson
Author of *The Keep*

DAY AFTER DILEMMA

I have been reading your magazine since it first came out a few years back and I must admit it occasionally impresses me. Your coverage of the ships and clothes of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* sticks in my mind as well done and informative.

However, you ran an article on *Never Say Never* Again and credited its director Irvin Kershner as having done *Eye of the Needle*. Let me point out that Richard Marquand did *Eye of the Needle*. It set him up to do *Return of the Jedi*. Kershner directed *Eyes of Laura Mars* from a John Carpenter screenplay. Tsk, tsk, tsk.

In FF #38 you ran an article *Armageddon Comes to the 90s*, which was essentially a comparison between *The Day After* and *Testament*, two movies dealing with nuclear war. Obviously Terry Parker

enjoyed *Testament* and wants everyone to know it. [I object to certain statements] he made about T.D.A. Parker wrote, "Four minutes of special effects, mixed with actual footage of atomic tests, is not enough to traumatize even the youngest, most impressionable members of the TV audience. Even shown on a theatre screen, where surely the impact would be stronger, vaporized populations are still just special effects." Well, I think he's wrong. I am a GI stationed in West Germany in a Pershing missile unit. After the movies ran stateside, all of us here used all

politicians will be the death of us yet—with religious leaders no doubt urging them on from the sacrosanct sidelines. I'm not making light of the problem (one need only sit down and watch any one of the documentaries showing Japan the day after to see what it's really all about), but it's hard to take that seriously a good-but-not-great tele-movie (science fiction is alive and, uh, well on network TV) when snake-oil salesmen and boob-tube biblists vie for air time, hawking their wares throughout.

On the lighter side (we're talking luff here, folks), I happened across



A mushroom cloud billows against the horizon in *The Day After*.

means at our disposal to obtain a copy of *The Day After*.

We finally got video copies from friends stateside and were able to watch. All who saw it had the same reaction. They were devastated! And we have to deal with the fact that we will be launching these weapons of mass-destruction. The movie played downtown in Germany for 3 months. It packed houses that sat in stunned silence. A friend who saw *The Day After* in Germany said all he heard during those four minutes of special effects were gasps of shock. I guess we all are more impressionable than Mr. Parker thought. SP4 Cornelius Johnson
New Ulm, FRG

DAY AFTER THE DAY AFTER

The furor (yawn) surrounding the broadcast of *The Day After*, glimpses of Armageddon sandwiched between sales pitches—brought to mind the 1938 broadcast over radio (another poor flagellant from way back) of *War of the Worlds* (the disintegration deaths from the movie version thereof, tinny bulls will note, are reprinted in TDA) and television, that paragon of senseless censorship and hypocritical hype, has come under fire by every self-appointed spokesman for the lame of brain and the simple of mind. Pressing issue or not (it was foretold thirty years ago), TDA does give us something to think about, i.e., that

the *Thriller* short starring Michael Jackson—looking like the monster the way Mary Shelley described him—and it would seem that John Landis has brought to life what otherwise might have been a laughable exercise in futility (if not for, among others, Rick Baker). A minor miracle in masterpiece may be, but only insofar as musical shorts are concerned). *Thriller* also features, as did *The Howling*, a cameo by none other than Forrest J. Ackerman, the gentleman without whose lifetime of devotion cinematic might well have been relegated to the back rooms.
William Coffin
Richmond, VA

TWO DAYS LATER

After reading the article from *Testament* to the *Day After* published in your edition of FF #38, I would like to congratulate Mr. Parker on a very well written review, but I do have to disagree with his outlook on *The Day After*.

Although I do agree that everyone should have watched this film, regardless of age or whatever, I can see why the film caused so much commotion throughout the television media. Children have been exposed to more violent acts on television than the war of *The Day After*, but the acts are of shoot-ins, slabbings, car accidents, etc., and they have been on television since its beginning and have become a common part of the

screen. Rarely have children been exposed to nuclear war (and we do live in a world that is on the borderline of nuclear war), hence the caution of the viewing of children, as well as adults. And to say that the horror of the war did not have that much impact is silly. Not only did the war have impact, but the events before the bombs dropped, was in itself, frightening and devastating. I hear the signal from the Emergency Broadcasting System without the famous words "This is only a Test" is a sickening feeling. To see a man trying to reach his family and to watch the reaction of a woman unable to face the reality of her world being destroyed, are both saddening. And to see the missiles being shot from their silos, leaving trails of smoke in the sky well, what more can I say.

And to say that the movie leaves the impression that nuclear war is survivable, I believe, is very wrong. When told to get into shelters to protect themselves from the fallout, one woman replies, "What for?" Another time, we are introduced to the only survivor of a nuclear war: a cockroach. A nurse who commits suicide, opting for the easier way out. And at the end, when we leave the survivors (can we call them that?), and the screen fades to black, we can hear a voice say, "Is anybody there... anybody at all?" That statement, if any tells us that we have met oblivion; that extinction is upon us, that it is time for the death of death.

Testament deals with nuclear war on a more personal basis, and with fewer characters, we are able to relate more with them than the characters of *The Day After*, and in that aspect, it is better (but remember the latter movie was censored by at least an hour or two. What was left on the cutting room floor?)

The Day After has been a milestone in cinematic history, and does make a powerful statement to the people of the world, and to lessen it in any way simply cannot be done.

George E. McCarg
Covina, California

WASTELAND WANDERER

To think of all the time I wandered the wasteland of boring magazines "I found you!" Your abundant photography and varied subject matter is irresistible to any real science fiction buff. The interest in other worlds and other realities is a fascinating one. Author Vernon Howard says, "Investigate the possibility that there is another world we know nothing about." Your magazine is doing exactly this. After reading and rereading it, I realized with glee that I actually got my money's worth—something rare in these inflationary times. Congrats!

Stephanie Warren
Boulder City, NE

By BLAKE MITCHELL AND JIM FERGUSON

OZ BEGINS ... Principal photography began Feb. 20 on *Oz* as the Disney/Gary Kurtz *Return To Oz* is now called. Starring are Nicol Williamson, Jean Marsh, Piper Laurie, Matt Clark, and Fairuza Balk as Dorothy. The story concerns Dorothy's return to the enchanted land to rescue the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion from the Nome King who has destroyed the Emerald City. Set for a 16 week shoot, filming will take place at Elstree Studios and on the Salisbury Plain, the site of Stonehenge. Veteran cinematographer Freddie (Dune) Francis is director of photography while Norman (Star Wars/Raiders) Rodden is production designer. David Shire is scoring the film to be released summer of '85.

ONE METAMORPHOSIS TO ANOTHER ... Ron Howard, whose current film *Splash* deals with a mermaid who changes into a beautiful blond with legs upon dry land, has been signed to direct *Cocoon* for Zanuck/Brown and 20th Century-Fox. The previous director, Robert Zemeckis, had to withdraw due to a scheduling conflict with the post-production on *Romancing The Stone*. The screenplay is by Tom Benedek from a soon-to-be-published novel by David Saperstein. As announced earlier, Ralph McQuarrie will serve as production designer and visual effects consultant. Principal photography will commence this June at various Florida locations.

RETURN OF THE "FOX" ... Name some of the most financially successful genre films of recent memory and one studio seems to have more than its share: 20th Century-Fox. Following in the tradition of *Star Wars*, *Alien*, *Empire*, and *Jedi*, Fox has announced that it will have five genre films rolling between April 1 and June 1. The films are the previously announced *Cocoon* (see above), *Enemy Mine*, *The Marble Of Haunted Castle*, an untitled horror picture, and an untitled horror picture with Universal. *Legend* *Enemy Mine* stars Louis Gossett as a character called the Drac and Tom Cruise as a downed fighter pilot from Earth. Filming is set to begin April 16 on the rock-bound coast of Iceland with a budget of \$18 million. *The Marble Of Haunted Castle*, a \$15 million fantasy adventure will be shot on three Fox soundstages beginning May 1. The story concerning five people trapped in a castle on an island, is a roller coaster, scary luncheon of a movie. Sydney Funn is the producer/director. The as yet untitled horror picture marks the return of Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins of *Dragonslayer* fame. To begin June 1, the \$7 million film will be shot on location from a Jim Bloom, Barwood and Robbins script. Finally, *Legend*, the

long awaited Ridley Scott film is set to begin filming with Fox having \$11 million invested in the \$25 million-plus production. Set to do the musical score is Jerry Goldsmith, who has been asked to begin composing even before filming included in the score is a spectacular ballet number for goblins who set a forest afire. Goldsmith describes the fantasy adventure as a cross between *Beauty And The Beast* and *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs*.

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE? ... In the southeastern region of the United States, there is a small peninsula of land known as Florida. On this peninsula there is a city known as Miami, exact coordinates are unavailable at the moment, but it is a place well known to the Time Lords. Recently, a group of time-traveling fans held a convention there, known as Omnicron, and Who was their guest of honor? That's right—none other than their favorite Doctor Who. This British SF production, now entering its 21st year, came to America to celebrate its birthday amidst a host of loyal Florida fans. Among the time traveling Brits present were John Nathan-Turner, the series current producer, the Brigadier, Mr. Nicholas Courtney, The Master, Mr. Anthony Ainley, and Ms. Nicola Bryant as the Doctor's newest companion. Leading this hardy band of time-trippers was none other than the heir apparent to the Who crown, Mr. Colin Baker. During the con's opening ceremonies, Ms. Bryant and Mr. Baker thrilled the fans by displaying in person, the costumes they will wear during the upcoming season. While Nicola's attire was snappy and very sporty, the new Doctor's many a spectator to put on his sunglasses. Colin Baker, with his blond hair, cherub smile, sparkling blue eyes and razor wit, promises to bring a new spring to the Doctor's step.

before. Cannom explained "We're going for a style which will look very real, but will also have a touch of comedy." Cannom, working with Pyun, is designing strange types such as 'mutant surfers,' 'surfer bunnies,' futuristic punk dancers and lizard-like villains. The mutant surfers will be clothed in special foam rubber body suits, to which will be attached unusual bandanas. Long strands of blond hair will hang from their heads, and they will be wearing large contact



"rainbow hue" regalia caused many a spectator to put on his sunglasses. Colin Baker, with his blond hair, cherub smile, sparkling blue eyes and razor wit, promises to bring a new spring to the Doctor's step. Photo by Valerie J. Brisson

CANNOM RIDES THE RADIOACTIVE CURL ... *Radioactive Dreams*, in production since March 5 on the island of Hawaii, will feature futuristic post-nuke characters designed by Greg Cannom. Cannom has been responsible for the special make-up effects on such films as *The Howling*, *The Sword And The Sorcerer* and *Dreamscape*. He has worked with make-up artist Rick Baker on *Videodrome*, *Tarzan—Lord Grey* and many other feature and television productions. With *Radioactive Dreams*, writer/director Albert Pyun (*The Sword And The Sorcerer*) is creating a fantasy vision of what the world could be like fifteen years after a nuclear holocaust. The story is peopled with strange and bizarre characters who interact with the more 'normal' lead players.

"We're creating make-up effects which have never been seen

lenses on their eyes. The end result will be an image of surfers who've spent too much time in a radioactive ocean. The punk dancers will have bizarre facial make-up, chrome mohawks, and other strange features, while the villains of the story will be wearing lizard-like faces made out of foam rubber. Shooting *Radioactive Dreams* is German Director of Photography Thomas Mauch, who has worked closely with director Werner Herzog for many years as the cinematographer on such films as *Aguirre*, *The Wrath Of God* and *Fitzcarraldo*.

FROM A BOND TO THE STARS ... Producer Jack Schwartzman, the man behind getting *Never Say Never* Again off the ground has announced a two year, four film production schedule totalling some \$80 million. Filming this fall will be *Hyper Space*, an original screenplay by Michael (WbNm) Wadleigh

and Durlinda Gose. The production, directed by Wadleigh, will be based in London with location shooting in New Zealand. The story concerns "teenaged aliens who come to Earth." The next production will be *Lonheer*, a \$21 million project produced by Schwartzman's wife, Tele Shire, co-executive produced by Schwartzman and Francis Coppola. The third film is *Link*, a \$12 million production slated for spring, dealing with a "genetic twist of fate." Finally, the most expensive (\$29 million) and biggest of the films will be *The Slave My Destruction*, based on the novel by Alfred Bester. Slated for a spring '85 start, *TSMD's* screenplay will be by Lorenzo (NSA) Sample and Julian and Judith Plowden. As to Jack's rights to do a sequel to *Never Say Never*, the rights have reverted to Kevin McClory who is actively searching for financing to mount a new Bond adventure of his own.

YOU CAN'T WIN FOR LOSING ... If you're wondering why there is no Academy Award category for Make-Up this year, you're not alone. According to an article in *Daily Variety*, it seems that only *The Hunger* had enough preliminary votes by screening committees to be placed on the ballot for full Academy voting. One would think that they would just award the Oscar to the film and be done with it. But not so unless there are two nominees for the full Academy to choose from, there can be no award. Somedays Hollywood makes no sense.

CLAN OF THE CAVE BEARS/ THE VALLEY OF THE HORSES TAKE A RIDE ... One of the most dreaded of filmmaker's nightmares occurs when there is a change of command at a studio which is considering one of their projects. Reason the old regime can't take your project with them, and the new regime usually wants nothing to do with old projects. Consequently, your film either ends up in limbo or in the dreaded vortex called "turn-around." Sometimes however, there is a happy ending. The films to be made, based on Jean Auel's powerful *The Clan Of The Cave Bears* and *The Valley Of The Horses*, ran along of the morning regime at Universal and were promptly put into turnaround. Fortunately, Producers Sales Organization (PSO), the same group responsible for getting *Never Say Never Again* financed, have picked up the rights to both films and have announced that *Clan* will begin filming this summer in the Yukon. Budgeted at \$15 million, the film will be directed by Michael Chapman from a script by John Sayles, and while a decision on the female lead is still up in the air, a summer of '85 release is planned. Also, while it had been initially planned to film *Horses* shortly after *Clan*, PSO

has decided to postpone the second film until the first one proves successful

ANTI-GRAVITY TAKES OFF.....

Moebius Theatre, a professional acting company based in Chicago science fiction fandom, opened its fourth original SF comedy revue, *Anti-Gravity*, on May 4 at Stage Left Theater in Chicago. *MT* was founded in 1976 and through its first five years the troupe has performed mainly at SF conventions (including the World Science Fiction Conventions in Phoenix in 1978, and Boston in 1980). But the troupe also made occasional club and college appearances. In late 1981, *MT* decided to try its luck before the mainstream theater audience in Chicago. The first revue in this venue, *Future Shock* (May-June 1982), did an extended run and led to other bookings. The troupe continued with *Starship of Fools* (October-November 1982) and *Where We Get All Our Crazy Ideas* (July-August 1983).

Moebius Theatre has devoted itself to bringing more, and more varied, science fiction to the live theatre. To date, the troupe has produced six original plays and 113 sketches. *Anti-Gravity*, the troupe's 30th production, will present—among other things—a correspondence course for heroes, a psychic who's hard of hearing both in this world and in the spirit realm, and a brief but thorough explanation of the entire universe. Starting on May 4, *Anti-Gravity* will be performed on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.—and through June 3—on Sundays at 3 p.m. Stage Left Theater is located in the heart of Chicago's Off-Loop theater district, at 3244 N. Clark St. Admission is \$5 (\$4 for senior citizens). Reservations can be made by calling 312/883-8830.

TIDBITS... STARMAN BEGINS

John Carpenter is directing **Karen Allen** and **Jeff Bridges** in this film which deals with "an alien stranded on Earth and his cross-country romance with a human." After initial filming in L.A., the lengthy shoot will continue in Las Vegas, Winston, Ariz., Monument Valley, N.M., Nashville, Tenn., Washington, D.C., and finally back in L.A. **Michael Douglas** is executive producer, with **Rick Baker** who did the fantastic age make-up effects for *Greystoke* also contributing. **RICHARD FLEISCHER**, after bringing in *Conan* if on time and under budget is now set to direct *Red Sonja* for Dino (in a related bit of news, the following cast item appeared in the trades in early Feb. "RED SONJA. Available part. Red Sonja, 18-21. Must have the virginal look of Brooke Shields and the body of Raquel Welch. Must be 5'7" or taller. Sure hope they find her..."). **Fries Entertainment** has announced it has **Arthur C**

Clarke's novel *Rendezvous With Rama* under development as a big-budget theatrical film. Also under consideration is *Screamers*, a horror original by **Dan O'Bannon**. No word on when filming will begin. **DARKSIDE RETURNS**. Those of you who watched the **George Romero-produced *Sales From The Darkside*** will be pleased to learn that a Sept. go-date has been granted for a TV series of the same name. The pilot, called *Trick Or*

Treat and starring **Bernard Hughes**, scored some impressive ratings when it aired last Halloween. Each show will cost about \$125,000 with **George** again handling the production chores in conjunction with his **Laurel Entertainment Group**. **GREEN LANTERN LIGHTS UP**. **Ed Myerson** has signed a long-term pact with **Fox** for one of the films he is developing based on the **DC Comics' Green Lantern** superhero. **RCD WILL**

TURN OVER IN HIS GRAVE. **Universal** has announced the deal for an hour pilot of a possible series called *Other World*, a fantasy adventure. The story concerns an American family on tour in Egypt when their vehicle makes a wrong turn and they end up in a "Twilight Zone" type of world. **FLESH AND BLOOD**. **Orion's 16th century epic** has begun filming in Spain. The film stars **Rutger Hauer**, **Jennifer Jason Leigh**, and **Jack Thompson**. ■

READABOUT

Reviews of the Newest In Genre Fiction
Documentaries, and Movie Compendiums

KIP'S ARMOR by Jay Danier, Treasure Hunters International, Inc., Minnesota, \$11.95.

Do you feel a real pang of regret when you turn the last page of your mystery book and return to a world where there are no spiral staircases and your rear window looks out on your garbage? Then, Watson, you will be delighted to know that somewhere in the United States a real treasure is hidden. The treasure is in the form of several specially sculpted pieces of bronze armor worth \$96,000 to the person who recovers all of them. Clues leading to the armor can be found in a new paperback, *Kip's Armor* by Jay Danier.

The book is a fast moving story about a young man named Kip, who loses, what else but, armor. Readers must read between the lines, solve riddles, word games and puzzles. One set of clues leading directly to the treasure is designed for computer buffs, another is developed for literary scholars, and still another is for geography experts. Some clues are obvious while most are cleverly woven into the story requiring witty and creative thinking. Treasure seekers are encouraged to use dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, computers, and as many reference books as they may deem important. The most vital tool—besides *Kip's Armor*—is an analytical mind and a wild imagination.

The treasure hunt is the brainchild of **Pete Bessonet**, a Twin Cities promoter and president of **Treasure Hunters International**. He is the only person who knows where the armor is hidden, and he worked closely with **Danier** to weave clues into the story. **Bessonet** is also the only one who knows what the armor looks like. He said that a treasure seeker who understands the clues will know when he has found the bronze armor. To claim the cash, the finder must arrange for verification at **Capital Bank** in St. Paul. Awards will be made with stacks of \$100 bills.

For indoor sleuths, *Kip's Armor* can be solved by mail. If the armor is not recovered by September 1, 1984, a drawing of correct solutions will be held. On Labor Day, five people will be flown from anywhere in the continental U.S. to the chosen site. Each will have ten



minutes searching alone, then nine, then eight until the armor is found.

As a clue, **Bessonet** said the armor is not buried on private land. Not all the armor is buried; that which is, however, commands a location that will not be disrupted by digging. "In other words," he said, "nothing is buried in flower gardens, on beaches, in ball parks, or in lawns. And it's person thinks I'm looking, he should check the area with a metal detector first. That will settle it. We don't want people damaging or destroying property." It is impossible to review *Kip's Armor* as a piece of writing. After a page or two the reader is completely caught up in a search for clues and who is to say that a less than well-tuned phrase might not itself be a clue? Although the book will not win any awards for fantasy fiction, its \$11.95 price-tag is certainly justified by its entertainment value as a puzzle. It is also pleasantly short, so it is possible to read it and get out to the real challenge of sorting out the clues in the same evening. At any rate, **Watson**, the game is afoot, so close up the consulting room and let's begin the hunt!

Kip's Armor is generally available in book stores. If it cannot be found, however, people are encouraged to ask their local book store to order the book. Mail order purchases may be made by sending \$11.95 plus 6% sales tax for **Minnesota residents** to **Treasure Hunters International**, Mail Order Room, 5353 Gamble Drive, Suite 106, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416.

—Judith Pyne

STARBLAZERS, W.C.C. Animation Comics Vol. 1, West Cape Corp., Ltd. publishers, English dialogue by William Ross, 163 pages, \$11.25.

As a fan of cartoon and tentacle animation—and Japanese animation in particular—it was able to approach this trade-paperback adaptation of the *Starblazers* series with more background than the average American reader. This newly released English translation of the Japanese video cassettes specifically to British/American *Starblazer* fans, and to judge the book fairly and on its own merit, one must aside certain "purist" notions. For example, most of the Japanese names have been changed: the battleship *Yamato* is now the *Argo*, and the young hero *Kodai* is now *Derek Wildstar*. Evidently, such anglicization was deemed necessary for Western marketing purposes.

Starblazers also sets an important standard in terms of layout and printing (as there are several volumes to follow if all 52 episodes are eventually to be published). The format of the book is that of an "anime comic" (an adaptation of a film by printing cell or frame blowups in a "comics" format with word balloons added). But in this case, the American *Starblazers* edition is larger than its Japanese counterparts, and the 4-color reproduction is "adequate," or at least legible. All of this is in the book's favor, as there is a wealth of visual detail to be presented and Americans are not used to squinting at their comics.

The story is set in the year 2199 AD, with the Earth under bombardment by a ruthless and powerful space armada. The enemy, called *Gamalon*, find Earth's unwillingness to surrender annoying. Earth's civilization has moved underground to escape radiation. Whole oceans have dried-up, leaving the earth a burnt out planet with little more than a year of life left. With our space fleet all but wiped out, a mysterious spacecraft, neither human nor *Gamalon*, streaks into our system to crash on Mars. The Mars outpost is manned by two cadets, *Derek Wildstar* and *Mark Venture*, who investigate the crashsite finding a dead alien-tentacle pilot and a small device. The device is brought to Earth by

the cadets aboard the sole-surviving fleet ship, the flagship of Capt. Avatar it appears as though some advanced race in deep space has taken pity on Mankind. The details of a tremendously advanced engine capable of warping through space have been encoded in the device, to allow a force from Earth to fly to a planet called Iscanar. On Iscanar there is a machine capable of cleansing the Earth of all radiation, but time is precious and the Galmopans are already at Earth's doorstep.

The combat rule of the old WWII battleship Yamato (the largest battleship ever built anywhere), is secretly being adapted for space from beneath, where it lays, sunk into the dried-up ocean bed. Captain Avatar recruits Wildstar and Venture as the first crewmen for

this "space battleship" now named the Argo, along with the ever-swift Nova, the sleek jet-bi robot IQ-9 and the pig-wrestling Dr. Sane. They and the rest of the Star Force get the show on the road with a fiery take-off battle, a space-war jump to Mars and an encounter with a floating continent in the upper atmosphere of Jupiter.

Obviously, *Starblazers* revels in being pure space opera and only the passions of its adolescent heroes tone down what otherwise might have become either too campy or more visually derivative. Yet, this was all done before the international popularity of *Star Wars*, so IQ-9 is not "R2-D2." Leader Desslock is not "Darth Vader," and Derek Wildstar is "Luke Skywalker" in name only (The Yamato saga owes much more to the early

pulp SF writers such as E.E. "Doc" Smith with his mighty *Skykirk* and prowling space fleets.)

In transforming *Starblazers* from Japanese video to English-language comic, William Ross has used the original translated dialogue line-for-line, which will evoke some affectionate memories from those who have already seen the show. But this book adaptation falls in many other respects. There are no additional descriptive passages beyond the occasional narrative elements previously used in the television show. Such additions are needed to aid visuals which sometimes just don't work without animation. More importantly, the flopping of the cel-art from the Japanese form (right to left) to the Western form (left to right) doesn't take into account word balloon

placement—consequently characters are answering questions which are not asked until the next panel and word balloons are rarely presented in a logical progression familiar to Americans. It is hoped that more attention will be given to this area of production in future volumes.

One bonus however: is the inclusion of black and white "production drawings" (used as chapter/episode dividers) which show in lavish detail the interiors and hardware of the Yamato. But, even here an artillery computer can erroneously be labeled as a launching catapult. Overall, if the attention to detail so obvious in the films and TV shows can become as much a part of the comics adaptation, the future success of this publishing venture is assured.—Doug Rice

VIDEOGAMES

The Latest In Video Game Cartridges, Playback Units, Arcade Games, Electronic Hand-Held and Board Games

SPACE SHUTTLE (Activision) ★ ★ ★

Looking for a tough game, with a lot of detail? Activision has it for you: *Space Shuttle—A Journey Into Space™*. Designed for Atari's 2600, and the Sears Video Arcade II, *Space Shuttle* uses every control the systems have to offer on both the joystick, and the master control unit, as it takes you from launch to docking with off-course satellites then through re-entry and landing.

You control it all, from beginning to end, as this game gives you a first hand view of what the real shuttle pilots have to go through with each mission. On-screen, during launch, you are looking through the shuttle's windows as you lift through the atmosphere. Controlling your ship to follow the computer-generated flightpath on the lower half of the screen, you see a flash when you reach the first point on the indicator, which indicates that the solid rocket boosters are firing to lift you into orbit. Providing you don't abort the mission by going too far off course, you now must shut-down your engines when you reach the same altitude as that of the "target satellites" which are orbiting at 210 nautical miles above the earth.

Once in orbit, you must match your course to pick-up the satellites, by adjusting the shuttle's speed, altitude and yaw (the left-right movement of your ship). When docking with the erratic satellites to gain more fuel for your mission, you have to match the satellite's speed by fine-tuning the position of your shuttle.

During the orbiting sequence, on your approach to the satellites, the computer screen will show the "S" curve display of your ship's position in relation to the satellite. As you approach the satellite, the screen will change to one that will help you to properly position the shuttle for rendezvous.



After rendezvousing with as many satellites as fuel will allow, you are ready for re-entry, and your return to Earth. For that, you'll have to turn the shuttle around, decelerate until you reach correct speed by firing the engines, then get on the right flightpath for your approach to the landing strip. During the re-entry, there are numerous things that can go wrong, or at least, harass you. It, for example, you don't hit the atmosphere at the proper angle, you'll "skip" off of it into space. Or during re-entry you momentarily lose contact with the shuttle on your computer screen, due to the superheated gases around your ship. Now, if you are still flying, and your mission hasn't been aborted, you are ready for your final approach to the runway. Remember, you aren't home and safe until your shuttle has stopped on the ground and the game is over. You can still touchdown too early and land in the desert, or overshoot the runway. On your approach, the computer

screen shows altitude and direction graphs to follow as the runway approaches in the shuttle's window view.

Ready now, landing gear down, nose up, touchdown, you've landed! As you roll to a stop, the computer screen shows how many rendezvous you have made and how much fuel you had left. To give you some idea of the difficulty of this game, you get a patch, for rendezvousing only 5 times, and having at least 4,500 units of fuel left if you've docked with the sixth satellite and return safely with 7,500 units of fuel, you get a special patch and are rewarded with an on-screen display!

Space Shuttle is not an easy game. In fact, strictly speaking, it's not a game at all, but rather a simplified version of an actual shuttle flight simulator. Designed with help from the people at NASA, it is a fun, exciting, challenging, realistic, and (most of all) educational. Easily it ranks a four-star listing, earning every star! About the only tip I can

give is to read the enclosed flight manual twice, at least, before starting to play.

—Mike Andrus

SUBTERRANEA (Imagic) ★ ★ ★

Flying your ship, the Cave Ranger, you find yourself trapped in the cave of some ugly, crawling monster called the Hexaplex. Suddenly, it starts releasing deadly flying creatures which you must shoot before they touch you, or else you will lose your ship. After you destroy them, the Hexaplex crawls away, leaving behind a glowing Treasure Crystal. Touch the crystal, and a tunnel opens up leading to the lower levels.

Once through the tunnel, you find that the air is filled with flying creatures, whose very touch means death! Plus, in some of the tunnels, the creatures can also shoot at your ship. After waging out these flying creatures, you come to an Electro-Gate in the tunnel floor. Pass through without getting hit by an electric charge, and you move down to the next tunnel, or level. Be careful not to touch the floor or ceiling of any tunnel, or it will cost you points. And, if you touch the skulls imbedded in the walls, you'll lose a ship. The deeper you go, the more complex the Electro-Gates become, and if you don't make it through the gate in three tries, you have to clear the same tunnel over again (and without getting any points for it). Once you have cleared a complete tunnel section, you'll see a glowing transit port in the tunnel floor. Go through that and you will find another cavern with another Hexaplex waiting. Once again you must start to clear the tunnel sections over again, only now with faster, smarter, and deadlier creatures.

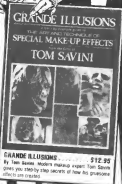
Although repetitive, *Subterranea* by Imagic for the Atari 2600 is a good action game, and worth its three star rating.

—Mike Andrus

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DOUG TRUMBULL
Talks About

NEW MAGIC SHOWSCAN[®] SUPER CINEMA



Interview by **DOUGLAS BAKSHIAN**

In 1975, Douglas Trumbull began to explore new technologies in making and showing movies. Inventor, director, and special effects wizard Trumbull had proven his talents for masterful movie illusions in such films as 2001: A Space Odyssey and Silent Running, and was turning his attention to the movie process itself. One year later, in conjunction with Paramount Pictures, he formed Future General Corporation for the purpose of research and development of innovative entertainment concepts. The fruits of those labors included Showscan, a revolutionary, 70mm, high-speed, high resolution film process.

While he continued work on his new film process, Trumbull kept on amazing the public with his breathtaking effects. In 1977, he began work on Close Encounters of the Third Kind as the Special Photographic Effects Supervisor, creating, among other things, the giant "Mother Ship." He served Star Trek: The Motion Picture in the same capacity in 1979. More recently, he designed the futuristic city and other effects for Blade Runner in

FF: What is Showscan and what makes it different from the standard movie format?
TRUMBULL: The effect created by Showscan is one of intense realism. It's hard to describe it any other way. It has three-dimensional qualities to it, although it's not three dimensional. The screen is very large and the image is very bright (about four times larger and four times brighter than any regular 35 millimeter film in a regular motion picture theater). The seating is ordered in a specially tiered, much steeper arrangement so no one has to look into the back of anyone

else's head. The theater is acoustically equipped so that the sound is virtually perfect, in fact superior to any professional recording studio I've ever worked in. Showscan is a quality control process throughout. It's not just a gimmick. It's a whole new way to make movies, photographing and projecting at 60 frames per second in 70mm film. The process captures so much visual and subliminal information that it delivers onto the screen about ten times as much as any 35mm film, which all helps to create an intense feeling of realism.

FF: Is the Showscan format targeted for any particular kind of audience?
TRUMBULL: Regarding what films will be made in this process, movies are a very popular artform, not an elitist artform, an artform for the people. Movies account for almost 72 percent, if not more, of the total "theatrical" box office grosses made over many years. And if you look at the top 50 box office hits of all time you'll see that a major percent are special effects films, "wide screen event films." I'm talking about Raiders Of The Lost Ark, Close Encounters, the

Star Wars series, the Superman series, the James Bond series, E.T., etc. This is what people really want to see in movies. The filmmakers who make these films are constantly expanding the boundaries of film technology to create new thrills and spills and excitement and dynamic events. Whether it's car crashes, plane crashes, chase sequences, explosions or starships and space battles, this is the fare that people really want to see in a movie. The most spectacular material. I've been working for years in the special effects business and

Above, Doug Trumbull, Showscan inventor and director, poses with some state-of-the-art robots featured in New Magic.

NEW MAGIC: THE STORY

The houselights dim. The screen comes alive with a scratchy print of a documentary about a large fireworks display. At the rear of the theater, the audience hears projection noises. The film goes in and out of focus. The sound is bad. Finally, the film jams in the projector and burns.

In a hurried attempt to save the presentation, Jeremy (Gerrit Graham), the film's projectionist, goes behind the screen to find a back-up print of the film. Addressing the audience with his apologies, he fumbles the second print as well, strewn the floor with celluloid spaghetti. Fearing for his job, he is determined to make a go of it and so uncovers a mysterious console. It is an "illusion" device invented by his employer, a magician named Mr. Kellar.

Jeremy swears the audience to secrecy and proceeds to demonstrate the device, which he obviously knows little about. Recklessly pressing buttons on the console, he activates the first illusion, a panoramic aerial sequence that transports the audience to soaring heights over icy mountains. As quickly as it appears, it vanishes. Jeremy presses another button. This time, an open road stretches before the viewers as they are placed in a high speed sports car careening around hairpin turns. Again, the illusion vanishes, but Jeremy is delighted. He enthusiastically calls up illusion after illusion, until he characteristically goes too far for one more thrill. The machine shuts itself off. The ground begins to shake. The building trembles. Jeremy is terrified. Is it an earthquake, or just another illusion?

Jeremy cowers for fear his angry employer will miraculously



appear and discover his careless tampering. Instead, a steel door opens before him revealing an unusual room filled with exotic mechanical and electrical paraphernalia—a guillotine, a giant spider in a web, an old cathedral clock, lightning machines crackling with

bolts of electricity, and modern-day robots along with a talking ventriloquist's dummy and a self-activating puppet of an archer with bow and arrow.

True to form, Jeremy lets his curiosity get the best of him as he explores the room. He tries to turn

on a lamp; it vanishes. He looks into a mirror; instead of glass, it is made of water, and suddenly a whale jumps out! Jeremy becomes even more frightened when he hears a siren and a police car crashes through the room. In the next instant, all is silent. Jeremy confidently concludes that these are just more of Mr. Kellar's tricks, so he foolishly puts his head in the "trick" guillotine. He gets stuck, as the archer puppet fires an arrow at the rope that holds the blade. The blade falls, and Jeremy's head turns up on the body of the giant spider.

Another illusion? Yes, but Jeremy has had enough and begs the absent Kellar to stop. Instead, a menacing shadow appears on the screen and raises an ominous knife. Suddenly, a real knife appears slashing the screen and cutting it down. With a bolt of lightning, the booming voice of Mr. Kellar (Christopher Lee) speaks to the trembling Jeremy who pleads for mercy. With another bolt of lightning, Kellar transforms Jeremy into ShowBiz' mascot Billy Bob Brokall. Anxious for Kellar's approval, Jeremy promises to be the best Billy Bob ever as Kellar orders him out of the theater.

Suddenly, Kellar appears in person and orders up the promised fireworks—not the crude, scratchy image seen at the beginning, but an elaborate display with all the brilliance and clarity Showscan can offer, and in full six-channel stereo. Once the fireworks show is over, Mr. Kellar addresses the audience again explaining the secret of his marvelous "illusion device," the Showscan process itself. Kellar approaches the camera, until only his eyes fill the giant screen as he promises more and greater Showscan spectacles to come.

1982, and directed and co-produced *Brainstorm* in 1983. The stunning effects for these last two films were completed at Trumbull's facility in Marina del Rey, California, Entertainment Effects Group (EEG) a state of the art company that works exclusively in 70mm.

For the future, new developments and new Showscan movies are in production. Trumbull's Entertainment Effects Group has just completed construction of the first high-speed 65mm mirror reflex crystal sync camera specially designed to meet the exacting standards of Showscan photography. New scripts are being created by Hollywood's leading screenwriters. As the first Showscan movie *New Magic* makes its debut at the ShowBiz Super-Cinemas, viewers are being asked how they would like to see this new film medium applied. Their answers will determine the shape of Showscan films to come. Recently Trumbull took time out of his busy schedule to talk to *Fantastic Films* after the opening of a new Showscan facility in Fairfax, Virginia.

we've constantly pushed the frontiers of cinema into new areas of experimental technology. And we've been influential in the development of the latest motion control technology used for creating many of these effects. But we finally got to a point of intense frustration with what we could do in terms of the quality of theatrical presentation around the country. We spend millions of dollars producing quality control films in a very professional manner but it's not getting to the public at the theaters.

FF: You lose that quality control on the showing end?

TRUMBULL: Definitely. It happens in a number of different areas. It happens in poor quality sound, poor quality image duplication at the laboratories. It happens in trying to save money by making prints from another generation negative so that the printing machine can run faster and the developing machine can run faster. It has to do with the fact that none of the major distributors have exchanges (which they used to have) where the prints would be checked. Periodically a print would be checked and somebody would see if it was scratched, or broken or had miss-

ing frames. But no one does that any more.

FF: Do you think that the popularity of the multiple "shopping center theaters" is hurting the industry?

TRUMBULL: Theater owners have lost the sense of exhibition excitement and showmanship that used to exist in the heyday of movies. We used to have theater palaces. Now we've just got square boxes with some curtained walls and an acoustical tie ceiling. The seats are not very interestingly arranged and you can hear the sound from the theater next door because there are six of them lined up, the

walls are thin and the screens are very small. So the experience of watching a film in the theater has diminished tremendously over the last few years. Also you don't see prints of as high a quality as we saw back with *Gone With the Wind*, what used to be called an imbibition print (a die transfer print where the colors were much more intense, vivid and sharper). Now the screens are so small that it's very much like watching TV.

FF: Is television and video entertainment luring the American public away from the movies?

TRUMBULL: People are defecting

Above, Jeremy, the bumbling projectionist, finds himself about to be decapitated by one of Mr. Kellar's magic tricks.

from the motion picture industry continually it shows in the total statistics of people who go to see movies because television is getting better and better. It's technologically improving itself constantly and television is able to supply a much wider range of products every day with cable and satellite TV, video cassettes and laser discs. For a long time movies have been afraid of the impact of television and it's absolutely true. I believe that we're headed for a period of stratification where an enormous amount of entertainment will be available on TV. It'll be good entertainment. It'll be the kind of entertainment that plays well on TV, but the spectacular event material will still exist in the theaters.

In order for movies to survive, we're going to have large theaters, event theaters, spectacular theaters. And I hope something like Showscan will be a big part of that. I've spent a lot of energy researching all of the processes that have come and gone in the movie industry, including 3-D and things like IMAX and tried to create a new process which is compatible with the practices the movie industry already knows. I don't think it's realistic to expect the creative forces in the movie industry to suddenly start thinking about holograms or something like that. That's just not in the cards right now—the technology's not there.

FF: Did you have any problems developing your new sound system. Do you still use a standard magnetic stripe?

TRUMBULL: No. We found that at the velocities we employ the magnetic stripe, where it hits the playback heads, is almost like sandpaper, creating an abrasive effect. We're presently running a much superior system. Showscan sound is on a separate 35mm magnetic stripe, the soundtracks are much wider, much more powerful and of a much higher quality. The soundtrack that you will hear in the theater is virtually only one generation away from the master soundtrack made in the recording studio. We also have a very powerful amplification and speaker system.

FF: What kind of research was involved?

TRUMBULL: We did a lot of analyses of the acoustics in existing theaters to develop what we feel is the ideal situation. We've created an acoustic environment that's dampened. It's a very non-reverberant environment so that if we have somebody on the screen whispering quietly you can still hear it because you're not hearing all of the other ambient sounds in the room. You're not hearing an air conditioning system or a popcorn popping machine in the background. You're not even hearing the other audience members. All of the sounds are absorbed very rapidly. Some theaters have ambient sound levels as high as 65 to 75 decibels before the movie is even running.

FF: Can you illustrate how loud that is?

TRUMBULL: The human hearing range goes from 0 to 130 decibels. 130 decibels is pain. OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) stipulates that you can't create a sound of more than 130 decibels without violating the law. We found that a loud sound like a car driving by or a bandsaw on a film is going to be in the area of 85 to 95 decibels. Showscan has some sounds that go up into the range of 110 decibels, or even as low as 20 cycles a second, which is sub-audible. It's almost a physical kind of motion. It's a totally natural sound.



Photos: Top down, Director of Animated choreography checks out a robot on the set. Doug Trumbull discusses a scene with Christopher Lee in *New Magic*.

We're presently developing a new, even better sound system, where the sound will be transferred onto the film with a new optical technique that will also allow us to have 20 to 20,000 cycles per second. Then we don't have to have the additional equipment to run the interlocked soundtrack. The velocity of the film is so fast that we can have a sound track that's much better than any optical sound track ever created before. What we're trying to do is to create a wider dynamic range from the softest sound to the loudest sound. Presently the best equipment to do that is digital, a digital audio disc delivers a very fine quality sound with a 90 decibel dynamic range. So the sound can go from 20 decibels to 110 decibels which will give us a really solid sound level. It's very hard to get the ambient sound level in a theater down below about 40. Just the shuffling of people's feet,

coughing and breathing creates an ambient distraction.

FF: So Showscan incorporates both a highly enhanced audio and visual experience?

TRUMBULL: This is the first time in probably 40 years that anybody has taken a comprehensive look at the entire process of producing and delivering motion pictures to the public. We're not just talking about a movie process here, we're also talking about a whole new attitude toward shooting the film, editing the film, presenting, viewing and hearing the film. Showscan is a complete and comprehensive

theater unless I know that every movie out of Hollywood is going to come this way. And Hollywood says, "Well, we're not going to put 15 million dollars into a film production unless there's one thousand theaters who want to show it." And so it goes back and forth and nobody commits.

But now with Robert Brock of Brock Hotel Corporation and Showbiz Pizza which is a joint venture that we've started, we've actually created an opportunity to produce films and construct a large number of theaters in very short order. We have four theaters right now. It's a test-marketing phase. We've shot two films and built four theaters. It's been studied very intensely by a Wall Street analysis firm. A detailed report will be prepared in May. We hope that will be the basis for a significant private offering which will allow us to build 100 theaters in 1984. We'd like to have 30 or 40 theaters up by midsummer and continue producing films. One of the nice things about the films is that they're short, high impact entertainment. We can have an idea for a film, write the script, go into production and have it in the theater in three to four months.

FF: Are they all going to be 23 minutes long?

TRUMBULL: No. Our first group of films will be the short films but we have a 48 minute project developed right now. We have a six part, epic, science fiction space serial underway which we'll cut into a two-hour feature film in a secondary release but we'll release sequentially each six weeks as a serial.

Showscan is a whole new approach to entertainment. Our research has proved to us that the average audience doesn't want to sit still for two hours in a theater any longer. They have a much shorter attention span. They're very media wise. They've watched enough television and high-impact editorial processes to be able to assimilate information very rapidly.

Of the people we've surveyed after they've seen Showscan, we asked: Would you prefer to see a 22-minute Showscan film or a 90-minute theatrical film? About 80 percent said they preferred the Showscan film but they would also like to see a slightly longer film, but not necessarily two hours long. I don't think we're going to need to make Showscan films any longer than about an hour. We have eliminated the amount of time taken up in a movie of people getting in and out of cars, walking up and down streets, in and out of doors, up and down elevators—it's amazing how much time is put into feature films that's just padding. There's no dramatic content there. People tolerate it just because they're waiting for "The Mother ship to arrive" or "the big battle sequence to occur" or whatever it is they came to see.

FF: Why the link with Showbiz Pizza and the arcades?

TRUMBULL: Pizza is the largest selling fast food product in the world. There's 200 million people a year going to Pizza places to have dinner. The Showbiz Operation is a combination of Pizza and entertainment. Robotics, Disney audio-animatronic characters, sophisticated arcade machines, continually changed and upgraded to the latest new machines. A "laddy area" so that you don't have to get a baby sitter, you can actually bring a small child and have a place for him or her to play, be taken care of and supervised, and in 99 percent of these locations you don't need to pay to park. They're very suburban, accessible locations. It creates a whole new opportunity for people to be entertained on a broad basis with a lot of flexibility. To be able to have dinner, have a drink, wine and beer is available, play some arcade or have a conversation or see a film. The film is changing every half hour so you don't have to make a big decision about being at the theater at 7:30 for the 8 o'clock show because that's the only time that night you can see it.

FF: This is a fascinating concept of the marketplace dictating content.

TRUMBULL: The pizza eaters of America are identical to the moviegoers of America statistically and demographically, the age groups etc. We think it's a really good marriage.

FF: Where are some of the other theaters located?

TRUMBULL: We have one here in Fairfax, Virginia, which is here so we can expose the process to analysts in both Washington and New York. We have one in Springfield, Missouri which is a test of how small a city we can go into. It's got a population of 150,000. We also have one in Huntsville, Alabama and one in Dallas, Texas. Dallas is a test for the suburban, sophisticated, wealthier community.

FF: What are some of the visual effects in your film?

TRUMBULL: This film, *New Magic*, is really a series of experiments and demonstrations to introduce the audiences to the Showbiz effect process and what makes it different from other films. It starts out with our attitude that movies really came out of magic: the stage illusionists of the 19th century who created huge fires on the stage or made people disappear or vanished elephants behind a curtain. All kinds of amazing illusions were created before motion pictures came in. Motion pictures were really a result of the development of magic lanterns, slide shows, light effects, sound effects, and musical effects. They really grew out of the illusionists' work. What we want to show is that movies are still a magic show. People still want to be amazed. They want to be surprised. They want to see something they're not going to get in their ordinary lives. Special effects is really a contemporary magic show.

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From Mad Max To Fletcher Christian

MEL GIBSON

Is On The Rise From Way Down Under

Mel Gibson—Australia's number one screen idol—known in America for his work in *Road Warrior* and *Year of Living Dangerously*, is in no big hurry to become a Hollywood "star." But who knows what will happen if Dino De Laurentis' epic adventure picture *The Bounty* starring Gibson as Fletcher Christian, becomes a smash hit.

In fact, Gibson feels most comfortable at home in Australia where he recently appeared on the stage in "Death of a Salesman." Like many talented actors, he values stage-acting above movie-acting, saying "I get more of a buzz out of theater; it just doesn't pay as well."

The 28-year-old actor values his family above any kind of acting. He shares a home in Sydney with his wife Robyn and their three young children, Hannah, and twin sons Edward and Christian. Gibson says he takes the responsibility of raising children seriously, and doesn't want to miss living his life with them.

Though born in New York, Gibson's roots are in Australia. His grandmother, Eva Mylott, was an Australian opera singer who came to America in search of fame and fortune. Gibson's father, however, moved Mel and his 10 brothers and sisters to Australia when Mel was 12.

In high school Gibson juggled the career options of both acting and journalism, being an avid reader and movie-goer (a Bogart fan). Journalism lost out, however, when Gibson was accepted to the National Institute of Dramatic Art in Sydney. He started appearing in movies even before he graduated, and shortly after graduating he starred in George Miller's futuristic adventure *Mad Max*, one of the most profitable Australian films ever made. To his credit, Gibson has never allowed himself to be typecast. After *Mad Max* he turned around and played a reformed young man in love with an older woman in *Tim*, for which he won the Australian Film Institute's best actor award in 1980. The next year he won the award again for his role in *Gallop*. In this Peter Weir film, he played a young adventurer-turned-soldier in the tragic-but-true World War I battle on the shores of Turkey.

However, most American filmmakers weren't aware of Gibson's presence until *Road Warrior* got a big release in this country in 1982. This movie—about a motley group of World War III survivors in the

Australian desert, fighting for gasoline to keep the remnants of their automobiles, and themselves, alive—was a sequel to *Mad Max*. Gibson reprised the role of the ultimate loner, the 20th Century gun-

teamed up with another Australian, director Roger Donaldson, in the filming of *The Bounty* (Donaldson, now living in New Zealand, has helped develop that country's film industry, and his film *Smash Palace*



Mel Gibson stars with Tavia Vernetta in *The Bounty*.

sting cowboy who leads the settlers through dangerous Indian lands—although this horses have become motorcycles and the Indians now wear metal studs on their black leather tomcoats. This movie has become almost a cult film, with Gibson as its hero.

His 1983 film, *The Year of Living Dangerously*, with Sigourney Weaver, increased his exposure to the American public and his respect in the industry. Gibson put away his leather, chains and ice-like persona to become a real person feeling his way around foreign Indonesia in 1965, a country on the brink of revolution. Gibson's character, an Australian journalist, is still a bit of an adventurer, but a very vulnerable one who becomes involved in a highly charged romance with an American Embassy employee (Weaver).

When it was suggested that *The Year of Living Dangerously* threatened to push him to the edge of international stardom, Gibson "hooded," says his co-star in the film, Linda Hunt (who played the role of male photographer Billy Kwan and who has been nominated for this year's academy awards as "Best Supporting Actress"). Hunt says Gibson's low-key attitude as being "very Australian," although some of his other traits, such as consideration for others, are "American."

Actually Gibson remains an American citizen, but says his outlook is totally Australian. He

was the first New Zealand film to be released in the U.S. by a major distributor.)

The *Mutiny On The Bounty* story has been filmed twice before, with Clark Gable and Marlon Brando each playing the role of Fletcher Christian, the young first mate who leads a mutiny against the tyrannical Captain Bligh.

"It's the same story, but not the same movie that has been made before," said Gibson. In this version, there is no black and white good guy and bad guy. It focuses on the fact that Christian and Bligh were best friends when they started the voyage. Trouble began after Christian and his shipmates started romancing the native Tahitian girls, when Bligh decided to ban shore leave and set sail.

Gibson joins a top-notch cast for the film. Anthony Hopkins plays Captain William Bligh, Sir Laurence Olivier is Admiral Lord Hood, head of the navy court which investigates the loss of the *Bounty*, and Edward Fox is a navy captain who is the prosecutor in Bligh's court-martial.

Filming began in England at Lee International Studios and ended at London's Pinewood Studios, where special effect shots were created. In between the crew spent weeks filming in Tahiti and New Zealand.

The Bounty was written for the screen (from Richard Hough's book *Captain Bligh and Mister Christian*) by Robert Bolt—who also wrote *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Dr*

Zhivago, and *A Man for All Seasons* (he won academy awards for the last two).

British Historian Stephen Walters was hired to insure accuracy in the true story of one of the longest and most remarkable open boat voyages in history, and how the young (Christian was 22 at the time) inexperienced officers and crew were swept away by a real-life island paradise.

The \$25,000,000 epic was produced by Bernard Williams (executive producer of *Ragtime*), an Englishman now living in California, who spent several years preparing for the filming of *The Bounty*.

One of the best paid stars of the film is surely the \$4,000,000 replica of the original *H.M.A.V. Bounty*. While the outside of the ship has the same size and appearance as the original—the hull from New Zealand, wood from Africa, the masts and sails from the Isle of Wight—inside the ship are twin 415 HP Kelvin diesel engines, satellite navigation equipment, a microwave oven and comfortable crew quarters. The cast and crew spent many days aboard the ship on open sea near Tahiti and New Zealand.

(From the history books: The original *Bounty* was a 230 ton coal carrier re-outfitted by the Royal Navy which set out December 23, 1787 for the Society Islands. Their mission, which they chose to accept, was to sail to Tahiti to get 1,000 breadfruit trees and take them to the West Indies for planting to provide cheap food for the slaves there. Bligh actually accomplished this plan in a second mission, but the slaves had no taste for the food.)

The production designer for *The Bounty* was John Graymark, who received an Academy Award nomination for his work on *Ragtime*. He previously worked on *Exile* and *Flash Gordon*. Art director Tony Reading also received a nomination for his work in *Ragtime*, and also worked on *Flash Gordon* and *Krull*. Costume designer John Bloomfield was also recently nominated for an award from the Academy of Science Fiction and Horror Films for his work on *Conan the Barbarian*, and has designed costumes for the stage and television.

The Bounty is a big movie, and could make a big star out of Gibson, whose charisma, expressiveness and ability may only need bigger exposure to make the question "Mel who?" nonexistent in America.

—Beverly Wood





**LEONARD NIMOY
STEPS OUT OF THE
SPOTLIGHT AS AN
ACTOR TO STAND
BEHIND THE CAMERA
AS DIRECTOR FOR
STAR TREK III: THE
SEARCH FOR SPOCK**

An Interview with Leonard Nimoy

STAR TREK III

THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK



Interview by JESSIE HORSTING

As actor Basil Rathbone will be forever associated with Sherlock Holmes, as Harrison Ford is Indiana Jones, Leonard Nimoy has long lived in the shadow of the character of Spock. Nimoy portrayed the stoic Vulcan science officer in 79 episodes of *Star Trek* and two feature films. Occasionally, a confluence of events—the right actor in the right role, at the right time—can conspire to overwhelm an artist with an unshakable stereotype. For many, it is a blessing in an otherwise undistinguished career. For the multi-talented Nimoy, it has been both a burden and a blessing, a schism which led him at one time to write a volume of personal essays I Am Not Spock.

It should be noted that Nimoy has never had any real difficulty separating himself from the alien persona of Spock. It is the fans that seem unable, or unwilling, to encourage the distinction. Those curious enough about Nimoy to engage in a little research will find an impressive list of credits in all facets of the theatrical arts. In addition to two volumes of poetry and photography, he has written, produced and directed for stage, film and television. He has appeared as an actor in an extensive

number of stage and film productions, as well as acting as narrator and host for two currently airing syndicated television series: *In Search Of...* and *Ugh! Camera! Action!*

Under the internationally recognized pointed ears, arched eyebrows and verdant complexion is an accomplished, talented, capable individual. Considering the experience and aptness that Nimoy evidences, it is almost unfathomable that anyone would question his ability to direct a feature film. But when it was announced early in 1983 that he would helm the 16 million dollar production of *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, many an eyebrow shot up in wary disbelief over a feature performer being given a directorship.

Much speculation appeared in print, notably in fan publications and specialty magazines, the scuttlebutt being that a deal had been struck, the directorship being a trade off for his continued association with the *Star Trek* feature films. The speculation arose largely from Nimoy's reported reluctance to participate in a third film (See FF #31) and his rumored insistence on the death of the Spock character in the second. In the following



interview, Nimoy addresses the issue, appropriately, with the facts—though he took a moment to comment, "Let's put it this way: I don't think there is anybody in the world that could coerce Paramount Pictures into handing out the assignment of director for a 16 million dollar film. They are just not going to do it!" He also details the production of the upcoming release (June 1st), revealing his contributions to and hopes for this third feature-length installment in the *Star Trek* apoloque

PREPARATION

Star Trek III, scripted by producer Harve Bennett, began principal photography on August 15th, 1983 and was shot entirely on the soundstages at Paramount, not unprecedented, but imposing some challenges for set designer Jack Chilberg. Nimoy had gathered an experienced crew, notably cinematographer Charles Correll (*Winds of War*), E.T. sound mixer Gene Canamessa and Gene Roddenberry acting again as executive consultant. The production was, as with *The Wrath of Kahn*, developed through the television divi-

sion at Paramount under the supervision of executive producer Gary Nardino and producer Harve Bennett. However, from pre-through post-production, the film got a guiding hand from Nimoy. During his conversation with *Fantastic Films* he details the events which led to the directorship but answers first the speculation that he "held out" for the position.

NIMOY: "There's too much at stake, a directorship is not something that can be coerced," he responded. "Paramount is a very successful company, they've had a string of very successful pictures, they've done a remarkable job in the last few years with the motion picture division, and it's not because they let people tell them what to do—it's not because they hand out jobs to people that force them into positions. It just doesn't work that way."

"We did have some very early discussions on *STIII* immediately after *STII* opened. They asked me how I would like to be involved and to what degree I would like to be involved. I said I'd like to direct the picture. I told them

that, with all due respect to Bob Wise, who directed the first picture, and Nick Meyer, who directed the second—both bright and talented men—I think I know certainly more about *Star Trek* than either of them. I told them I thought I had enough film background to demonstrate the expertise to do the job, technically."

"Their reaction, immediately, was excellent. Mike Eisner, the president of the studio, during our first meeting felt it was a great idea. He even asked me if I would be interested in writing the script, though Harve Bennett had already expressed to me his interest in that job. I told Mike I would be happy to work with Harve, I thought he could do the job. That's the way it started. It was very positive from the beginning."

FF: What was it that you wanted to see in this film that you felt the first two may have lacked?

NIMOY: Emotion, for one. I felt the first film was an exploration, with a heavy emphasis on "visual spectacle," and the characters went along for the ride. *Star Trek II*, I felt, was a fun

Photos: Above left, top down, director Leonard Nimoy demonstrates the Vulcan nerve pinch on Conway Gideon as actor DeForest Kelly and cinematographer Charles Correll look on. Aboard the freighter *Merchantmen*, the captain (Paul Sorenson) and first officer (Danny Rogers) watch as the Klingon spy Vulkanas (Cathie Sherwin) transmits data to Lord Krug. An alien crewmember (Tom Mingo) aboard the *Merchantmen* stares intently. Center, Kirk and Lord Krug engage in deadly combat above a volcanic precipice as the Genesis planet degenerates rapidly around them. Above right, top down: aboard the *Enterprise*, Kirk transmits a dangerous bluff to Lord Krug as Scotty and Chakov wait out the Red Alert. On board the *Bird of Prey* Krug (Christopher Lloyd) and Torg (Stephen Liak) return their answer in the battle of wits with Kirk. Krug's ferocious Klingon pet bares its fangs. All photos © Copyright 1984 Paramount Pictures.



romp, a good move in the right direction, an energetic "fun" picture which I still didn't feel really involved all the characters. It didn't use the Star Trek "family" as successfully as it might have.

FF: Though you have had extensive experience in the medium, still, this was your first feature film. Did your previous directorial outings really prepare you for the complexities of a "big" film?

NIMOY: I felt extremely well prepared, which was the only way to get this thing done on a reasonable budget. It needed meticulous preparation, there were endless conversations, with the art director, with Charlie Correll, with ILM, meetings in L.A., meetings in San Rafael, endless preparation. Everything was arranged so there would be as few surprises as possible.

FF: Despite the preparation, were there surprises?

NIMOY: The surprises were creative surprises rather than problem surprises. Everyday you run into surprises when you're making a movie. I mean, an actor comes up with

an idea, or a cameraman comes up with an idea, or a wardrobe person. But they are creative surprises, not problems.

FF: Except the fire.

NIMOY: Yes, but the fire didn't really affect us. It was a concern, for a couple of hours while it was going on. It could have destroyed the major set we had built, the New Genesis planet set which was extremely expensive and had taken a long time to build. The fire had reached the stage where that set stood—one wall and the ceiling were burning but it was stopped before it actually got to the set.

FF: Did you begin the film with a particular concept in mind, a way you wanted it to look, and have that change as filming progressed?

NIMOY: Actually, it was meticulously laid out. There were storyboard sketches of the entire picture, we did color samplings of all the scenes. What I mean by that is, though the storyboards are in black and white, we had color renditions of all of the sets and all of the special effects shots were sketched out very carefully. There is no other way to pull this kind of thing together, on budget and on time,

unless you have the "jigsaw puzzle" put together in advance, then start to build all the pieces so they'll interlock successfully with each other. There's no other way to do it.

Otherwise you're swimming and you hope you'll find a shore somewhere. We set out on a 49 day shooting schedule—which is a modest schedule for a picture this size and we finished on the forty-ninth day—the only way to do that is to be meticulously prepared.

PRODUCTION

Star Trek III relied exclusively on interior sets constructed on the Paramount lot to tell the adventure of *The Search For Spock*. Interior film work can be restrictive for any director because it limits the space where a camera can be placed, every scene must be artificially lit, every "place" the script calls for must be artificially constructed. Add to those requirements the need to coordinate the action with the many special effects shots outlined in the script and one, indeed, has the jigsaw puzzle Nimoy refers to. The special effects were provided by ILM, as with *STV*.

and Jed's Ken Ralston assisted Nimoy in providing for effects, as well as supervising the in-house work.

But somebody still has to take the pictures, and the director's primary job is to designate how those pictures are to be taken and to do so with style. Nimoy admitted that his background in photography (two published collections and a number of exhibits) helped to aid the decisions he had to make.

NIMOY: I found it very helpful. I have strong feelings about what I want to see, strong feelings about lighting, strong feelings about composition. After some meetings with Charles Correll, our cinematographer, after looking at his work, I felt he had a similar sense, a similar style to what I was looking for. I enjoy seeing stylish, dramatic photography and I felt it was needed for the film.

We had a great relationship. I look through the camera a lot and usually, if the shot wasn't right, we would agree that it wasn't right. Something might be lacking—either the position of the camera or the lighting or something. We'd talk around together until we found it. If I found a shot that I thought was exciting, he would see what I was after and we'd get it. He would say to me, "I think you'll like this" and I'd look in the camera and agree. We had very similar tastes and developed a great relationship.

FP: Were there any directors you consulted, admired or studied as preparation?

NIMOY: I didn't really do a lot of consulting, though there are a lot of directors I admire.

I've been around the business a long, long time. I started working on film in the early fifties, I've been on sound stages for over thirty years. I've worked for a lot of directors—some brilliant, some not so brilliant. I have directed off and on over the years. I've worked a lot with actors, taught actors for five years before *Star Trek* started. I have a lot of photographic experience and have directed theater (in the sixties). So there's a long reserve of experience to draw from.

FP: You have a strong understanding of the characters and want to develop them more fully than has ever been done—was there any apprehension from the cast about perhaps showing the flaws as deeply as the virtues?

NIMOY: There was, I think, an unanimous response from the cast when they heard I was going to direct the picture. The response was "That's interesting, what's this going to be all about?" I could understand that. I expected that, I think they were surprised and concerned and curious. They didn't know what to anticipate. Putting myself in their shoes, I would feel the same way.

The concern was, "Is he going to make a



movie for himself? Is he going to make a movie that involves us. What are his feelings about us?" I don't think there is any doubt that everyone is aware that there has been some question in the past about my attitude toward *Star Trek*; that, as an actor, I have been somewhat of a controversial character concerning

Star Trek. The question, I think, in their minds was what are we going to find out now about Leonard Nimoy and *Star Trek*?

From the response I have had, I think they all had a terrific time. They all came away with the feeling they had been done justice, that they had been treated with dignity and re-



Photos: Above center, the *Enterprise* prepares to dock with the giant orbiting space station; at right the newest addition to the Federation Starfleet, the *Excelsior* is seen and McCoy aboard the *Enterprise*. Aboard the U.S.S. *Grisson*, Lt. Sasevik (Robin Curtiss) and Dr. David Marcus (Merris Butrick) discuss unusual data emanating from the



spect. I think they are all very high on the movie, but you really have to talk to them as individuals, it's very hard for me to speak for them.

FF: The filming was done on a moderate budget and a tight shooting schedule, following the example set by *STW*. Do you feel the

economy with which the *Star Trek* features are produced sets an example for some of the bloated-budget fantasy epics?

NIMOY: It does set an example, it shows it can be done. It's just a question of how you approach the project and whether or not you're really ready when you start. I think one of the

biggest dangers in making a movie is that the desire to start is so overwhelming, you may overlook the fact that you're not quite ready. Rather than delay a production or postpone a production, it does happen that people will start to make their picture hoping that things will work out along the way. Of course then, time-consuming problems will crop up from the lack of preparation. We spent sixteen weeks in preparation for this film. We had time to do it right.

THE STORY

The story for *STW* picks up where *STW* left off, with the *Enterprise* and its crew of trainees making their way home after the confrontation with Kahn and the birth of the planet New Genesis. The story focuses on, as the title implies, the search for Spock, a search that leads Kirk, McCoy and company to Vulcan, back to New Genesis and to a confrontation with the Klingons and Star Fleet. One question that has been long anticipated by the filmmakers is if, in fact, Spock will be resurrected in this film. It is a plot point that no one wishes to discuss, understandably so, considering the furor among fans instigated by the premature release (in the *Wall Street Journal*) of the news of Spock's death before *The Wrath Of Khan* was released.

The fact is, no matter how his death is resolved, no matter what form he may or may not appear in, no matter how the script consoles his absence, there will be some very unhappy fans. Any resurrection will meet cries of *deus ex machina*. His failure to appear in corporeal form will meet accusations of cop-out. Anything between is likely to be considered, at best, only compromise though few will argue against the desire to see him return. The one positive aspect is that this speculation arouses great curiosity about the film, a phenomenon guaranteed to warm the hearts of the producers. Controversy about a film generally translates as good box office.

Nimoy is acutely aware of the criticisms (directed at the first two films) regarding the lack of development in the relationships of Kirk, Spock and McCoy beyond that established by the series. Correcting that deficiency became a top priority, though Spock's absence would seem to negate the possibility. Nimoy believes that the "hole" Spock has left in the trumvirate of central characters will be filled in an unorthodox manner.

NIMOY: You still have in this picture, I think, a sense of the trilogy because the fact that Spock is not there is dealt with very strongly. Therefore, in an interesting way, there is a sense of presence. The picture is about him. It's called *The Search For Spock*. It's a story in

(Continued on page 44)



top-of-the-line in starship technology. Bottom left to right, Kirk confers with Uhura (Nichelle Nichols). A young Starfleet lieutenant is amazed as Uhura beams Scotty, Kirk Genesis planet. Wildly varying topographical extremes are examined by David Marcus and Lt. Savelik on the Genesis planet. All photos © Copyright Paramount Pictures.





STAR TREK III

THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

Photo: The U.S.S. Enterprise is dwarfed by the megalthic Federation space station as it prepares to dock for repairs after a long journey home. Photo © Copyright 1984 Paramount Pictures.

INDIANA J

and the
TEMPLE OF



JONES

DOOM™



From Sri Lanka To Macau To EMI-Elstree The *Indiana Jones* Production Team Brings It All Back Home . . .

Interview by **MICHAEL STEIN**

Frank Marshall began his career in film through a chance meeting with director Peter Bogdanovich, who at the time was completing a film (Targets) for the venerable Roger Corman of New World Pictures. That association led to various other Bogdanovich projects (Paper Moon, Nickelodeon, Daisy Miller) and in 1973 precipitated another chance meeting overseas with director Steven Spielberg. Nothing came of the meeting at the time and Marshall went on to produce two films for action director Walter Hill (The Driver, The Warriors) as well as a number of other projects.

Spielberg had kept Marshall in mind, however, and asked him to act as producer on the '81 release Raiders Of The Lost Ark. That association led to a number of other projects with Spielberg: Pottermyst, E.T., Twilight Zone: TM, and most recently Marshall served as co-executive producer with George Lucas for Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom. In the following interview Marshall details the production on LI&TOD, a film brought together, to Marshall, by a talented cast and crew, the experienced production team, and just a little "foo-foo rice."

FF: Raiders of The Lost Ark was a great success both with the fans and at the box office. How do you top your own success? What do you need to do to make a bigger and better Indiana Jones film?

MARSHALL: It is a real challenge. The first thing you do is try to retain the original formula. But since we have already established what the genre and the spirit of the movie is, we also have a chance to expand the ideas and the formula. We can take a few more chances with the material in this one. We can go a little farther and stretch the predicaments and develop the character more. Indiana Jones becomes a much more mature character in Temple of Doom.

FF: Are there going to be more spectacular stunts in this movie? Have you gone back to some of the old ideas from past serials?

MARSHALL: Yes, our attempt was to, once again, do the kind of stunts that people haven't seen before. They are certainly as spectacular as the first movie, but they are all new and different.

FF: How closely do you work with your scriptwriters when you sit down to put the movie together?

Photos: Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) and Willie Scott (Kate Capshaw) are surrounded by a throng of curious Mayan village dwellers. Insert above, director Steven Spielberg films up a shot in Sri Lanka. Photos © Copyright 1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.



Photos at left top down, Indy, with whip and sword in hand, fights with Thuggee guards. Top center, only moments away from the rock crusher, Indy continues his struggle with a giant Thuggee. Photos © copyright 1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.



MARSHALL: I don't work that closely on the script, that is left up to Steven and George. I participate in the meetings from a production point of view —saying, gee that's a great idea but I don't know how we are going to do that. I try to inject reality and practicality into the script. Of course George Lucas has a way of saying, "Hey, you can do it." And Steven is a great one for coming up with the ideas. He's creative, not just as a director, but in coming up with ways of doing things, and making them work from a production standpoint. He's very flexible, which is a great help to Robert Watts and myself. I think it's a great team.

FF: Movies such as *Raiders* and *Temple of Doom* have become famous for their spectacular stunt work. How do you go about staging some of the more dangerous stunts?

MARSHALL: The stuntman's job is to do a stunt that's safe, and make it look dangerous. You really have to rely on your experts. We have situations where stunts are written into the script, but ultimately it's up to the stunt coordinator and special effects man to say whether they can be done or not. We would never do a stunt that was considered a "dangerous stunt." Everything is well coordinated and planned out. We're always concerned with safety above all else.



FF: Can good camera work make a stunt even more spectacular and dangerous looking than it is?

MARSHALL: Absolutely. Steven has a way of directing a film so you get the most out of the action.

FF: Many fans were enthusiastic about what you did in *The Making Of Raiders* television documentary, which showed stuntmen as the real stars — the unsung heroes.

MARSHALL: Well, in a way they were the heroes of the early films, too. **FF:** Was *Temple of Doom* more difficult to produce than *Raiders*?

MARSHALL: In some ways it was easier, in some ways harder. For example, when we arrived in Sri Lanka, it was like a great big reunion; we had almost all the same crew there. The same production people, transportation people, same caterer, those sort of things. We also had Indiana Jones again, so we were starting out on a completely different level than before. We all knew what kind of a movie it was, what the atmosphere and spirit should be, who the character was. So it seemed like we were starting on the first day of *Temple of Doom* where we'd left off on *Raiders*. From that point on we just expanded. In that respect it was easier. On the other hand there were a couple of scenes in this movie that were harder adventure

action scenes to create than in the first movie. So we had to figure out how to do them. The fact that we'd all worked together before on this type of movie was a great help.

FF: Is it harder producing on location or on controlled sets?

MARSHALL: It's much harder on location because if the camera breaks, you can't just call the studio camera's department and get a new one. You have to have everything with you, all the back-up you may need.

FF: You were in Sri Lanka, an international location. Did you have to deal with politics and government unrest?

MARSHALL: We left before the trouble started. They had a civil war just after we'd gone. We had a very good experience there. But you do have to deal with the local government, customs and shipping equipment. You also have to set up a plan to ship the negative back to the lab in London, and a plan for the banks to exchange currencies. It's not real easy. It's much harder to ship the camera equipment to Sri Lanka than it is from California to Nevada. The language is different, the way of life is different.

FF: What were some of the other location shoots included in the movie?

MARSHALL: We were also in Macau, Hong Kong and London, at Hamilton Air Force base here in California and in and around some of the rivers and

mountains of California. We went from the snow to the rapids.

FF: Did you work with many animals this time?

MARSHALL: Lots of animals. We replaced the snakes of *Raiders* with bugs, and we worked with a variety of different jungle animals, such as elephants in Sri Lanka, a tiger, monkeys and lizards.

FF: What do you think will make this movie different from its predecessor?

MARSHALL: *Temple of Doom* is a much more personal story for Indy. It leans more towards the humanity of things, rather than what will make him rich and famous.

FF: Harrison Ford fans will appreciate that.

MARSHALL: Not only his fans, but I think Harrison had a great time with the story.

FF: Harrison seems to put a lot of himself into the role of Indiana Jones. What do you think is the reason for the charm and popularity of this character?

MARSHALL: I think Harrison has a natural charm. It's hard to put a finger on what makes one actor or character more successful than another, but this is the kind of hero all of us want to identify with. He's the kind of guy we'd all like to be. In this movie we expand the role. Harrison and Steven each brought a lot of new ideas in about the character. They really came up with something great.

FF: A good character also needs other actors to play off of. You have a new leading lady, Kate Capshaw, and a new sidekick for Indy. Can you talk about what characters they are and how they work into the story?

MARSHALL: Well, I can tell you how they got their names. The girl Willy and Indy's sidekick, Short Round, were named after two dogs. So was Indy. George Lucas' dog is named Indiana, Steven Spielberg's dog is named Willy, and the scriptwriters' dog is named Short Round. People always ask me, "How do you come up with the names for characters?" Well, that's one way. Short Round worked out great because he's short and he pets around a lot. I think he's unique. There hasn't been a character like him before.

FF: Does Indy befriend him or perhaps save his life?

MARSHALL: They met up before the movie begins. In *Temple of Doom*, Shorty's his sidekick, you get a little bit of his background during the movie. But at the start of the movie, Indy doesn't know Willy Scott, a nightclub



singer in Shanghai. They accidentally get together at the beginning and the three of them go on all these adventures.

FF: The new movie isn't really a sequel or a prequel, it's just a continuing of the adventures in a timeless way, like the *Sherlock Holmes* or *James Bond* stories. But it does take place before *Raiders*. Are any of the characters from *Raiders* reprised in *Temple of Doom*?

MARSHALL: No, the only returning character is Indiana Jones. As you said, it's not a prequel and it's not a sequel, just a new episode.

FF: One integral part of the charm of the Indiana Jones movie is the light-hearted humor that keeps the audience smiling, even during dangerous situations. Have you worked humorous situations into the new movie?

Photos: At left, director Steven Spielberg checks dia



MARSHALL: Yes, we have the same sprinkling of humor in *Temple of Doom*. There has to be some sort of comic relief because of the perilous situations that Indiana Jones gets into. He's still a vulnerable character like he was in the first movie. He isn't perfect and he does make mistakes. So we're able to laugh at ourselves by laughing at him, which makes the movie more charming. There is more comedy in *Temple of Doom* than in *Raiders*, but there are also more scary parts. The mood shift is bigger and we take more risks with it. But without the humor you wouldn't have an Indiana Jones movie.

FF: Have you reprised any of the "gags" from *Raiders* in the new movie?

MARSHALL: In the first movie there was actually supposed to be a long fight between

Indy's whip and the assassin's sword. It turned into the most famous moment in the movie. In *Temple of Doom*, when Indy reaches for his gun it isn't there—that's funny too but also a tip-of-the-hat to the first movie.

FF: You have worked very closely with Steven Spielberg on numerous projects. What is he like to work with?

MARSHALL: It's exciting. Steven stimulates everyone around him in a spirit that combines excitement, creativity and hard work. That makes it wonderful for those working with him. He is organized, but on the other hand he can have a spur-of-the-moment idea and be very flexible. He has instantaneous ideas which sometimes create problems, but he has the same attitude as George. "We can do it." And somehow we always work it out right

on the set. He's also a real craftsman, as far as his knowledge of moviemaking goes, as well as a great storyteller, and it all comes together to be incredibly creative. Steven also has enough confidence in himself to accept ideas from other people. It's great to work with him because he is very accessible.

FF: Harrison Ford seems to be a fairly quiet man with a wry sense of humor.

MARSHALL: He's got a great sense of comic timing and his humor is very dry. He's very serious about his work, one of the most professional actors I've ever worked with. He can have a good laugh, tell a good joke but he keeps a low profile because it is hard work. He's great with the crew, he's always aware of what's going on around the set. You've got to keep a light-hearted attitude about things



or you're never going to make it FF: It seems to be part of your job to keep everyone, the actors and crew, happy, to keep the atmosphere on the set enjoyable, no matter what's happening. How do you do that?

MARSHALL: With lots of foo-foo news. Seriously I think it's part of my job to make things enjoyable because a lot of the attitude on the set of any movie is reflected in the movie.

FF: What do you see in the future for Indiana Jones movies?

MARSHALL: We're probably going to do a third one—we're all talking about it.

FF: How much was George [Lucas] present during the filming?

MARSHALL: He visited once in Sri Lanka, a couple of times in London, and he was here during the shooting in California. He spent about the same amount of time with us as he did on the first movie.

FF: How much input does he have into the movie? Does he shift things around during the shooting or does he stand in the background and observe objectively?

MARSHALL: A little of both. He's a good sounding board for Steven. But George's input is already built into the script. George doesn't step in and demand things. But he's

there if you need him. He has a calming influence on us all.

FF: What kind of special effects work is ILM putting into the movie? Miniatures, optical effects?

MARSHALL: Sort of a potpourri of everything. There are about 50 more ILM shots in this movie than in *Raiders*.

FF: Are there any spectacular visual surprises we can look forward to?

MARSHALL: Lots of them. I have many favorite scenes in this movie.

FF: Any teasers you can give us? **MARSHALL:** Keep your eye on the life raft. And remember, this one's done for real.



FRANK MARSHALL

Producer Robert Watts Continues the Behind-the-Scenes Story Behind Indiana Jones And The Temple of Doom

Interview by JESSIE HORSTING

British filmmaker Robert Watts has been associated with five Lucasfilm productions since 1975. He first served as production supervisor on the film *Star Wars* which, Watts admits, was a bit of a gamble for all involved. Although his work on that film led to steady employment with George Lucas, his involvement with the genre pre-dated the Lucas epics—significantly with his work on the 1968 science fiction classic 2001: A Space Odyssey under the auspices of fellow Briton Stanley Kubrick.

Though Watts had known from an early age that he wanted to pursue a career in filmmaking, he first sought a degree in Modern Languages at Marlborough College in England, then continued his studies at the Université de Grenoble in France. Upon completing his studies, he faced the disagreeable prospect of two years of compulsory military service. He elected to serve with the Nigerian Army on the west coast of Africa. "I asked for that assignment," asserts Watts. "I had to spend two years in the army—rather than spend two years in England, I thought I'd go and see something. . . ." His desire to go "see something" has since expressed itself in location scouts and film productions covering the globe.

His service and studies completed, he was able to turn his attention to

his true interest, filmmaking. His first employment was on a British production in 1961, a comedy titled *A French Mistress*. His career began in a traditional capacity: "I was a gopher. . . ." Watts remarked, without disclaimer, ". . . an assistant gopher—there were two gophers on the movie and I was the junior of the two." From this somewhat ignominious start, Watts built a career that has spanned nearly twenty-five years and involved him with some truly memorable, and a few truly forgettable films. But by his own admission, he has taken great pride and delight in his association with George Lucas and Steven Spielberg.

From his first film for Lucas, *Star Wars*, Watts went on to act as associate producer for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, then acted as co-producer for *Return of the Jedi*, and finally as producer, the "nuts and bolts" supervisor for the filming of *Indiana Jones and The Temple of Doom*.

In the following interview, Watts details his start in the business of making movies and takes us behind the scenes on some Lucasfilm favorites, as well as outlining the difficulties posed by the latest installment in the continuing adventures of Indiana Jones.

FF: When you secured your first job on a motion picture, did you find any particular aspect of filmmaking to be most appealing?

WATTS: When you go into a picture, starting as a gopher or office boy, you tend to be in the production department, you gravitate towards that area. Of course, the natural progression is that you get a job as a third assistant director (a grade that exists in England though not in the U.S.) because that's most like a gopher on a shooting set.

FF: A gopher with a title?

WATTS: Exactly, which in England is a formal union grade. Then, you work your way up from there.

I did a lot of British cinema in the early days, a lot of nouvelle vogue cinema emerging in the early sixties, *Daring*, *Repulsion* (Roman Polanski's first English language film) and others. I went on to work on two of the early James Bond films, *Thunderball* and *You Only Live Twice*. I worked on *Papillon* and Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey and a wide variety of other films, some of which you'll not have heard of, because they were totally unsuccessful.

FF: 2001 was a landmark film, full of innovations for the time it was made. Did it give you a lasting interest in the genre?



Photo: Director Steven Spielberg shares a laugh with actor Harrison Ford (as Indiana Jones) on location in Sri Lanka. Photo © Copyright 1984 Lucasfilm Ltd.



ROBERT WATTS

WATTS: I felt very fortunate to have worked on 2001 because it was a departure in terms of science-fiction filmmaking. I have been fortunate to work on two films that were definite departures, because later I was to work on *Star Wars*—though the two films were totally different. 2001 was aiming to be completely "factual," utilizing the knowledge of the time. It was based on intelligent conjecture as to what would be possible.

FF: More like futurism than science fiction?

WATTS: It was science fiction as opposed to science "fantasy" meaning the film dealt technically with weightless conditions, air locks, all those aspects.

In *Star Wars*, you don't mess with that—it's a different set of rules—you're making a picture for the fun of it without saying to yourself, "Oh, God, how do I get this spaceship into a docking bay?"

FF: You went on to make five films with Lucasfilm.

WATTS: I was fortunate, in 1975, to fall in with Lucasfilm, who by then had one successful film already, *American Graffiti*, but was yet to take that stride into the standing it has today. I'd first met Gary Kurtz (SFW producer) in Culver City while working on a film called *Wrath of God* in 1972. (His claim to fame was that it was Rita Hayworth's last movie.) The result of this almost chance meeting got me involved, almost four years later with *Star Wars* as production supervisor, sort of running the nuts and bolts of everyday shooting. No one was sure about any additional time at that time and during the hiatus between *SW* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, I did two other films. I worked on a section of *The Other Side of Midnight* and did a real "art-house" movie in Afghanistan called *Meetings With Remarkable Men*. I was called back in January of 1978 to help with preparation for *ESB* and have really been there ever since.

FF: Did you provide impetus to Lucasfilm's decision to use the EMI-Elstree facilities for the first film? They've used those studios ever since. Is it a matter of economics?

WATTS: The first film was a risk. It was a most odd screenplay. 20th Century Fox was, I think, targeted to pick it up. But they were nervous, so the economics became a major consideration. England was not only somewhat cheaper to shoot in, but they had something very difficult to find at that time in the U.S. eight or nine stages in one studio available at the same time. That was a very key aspect from a financial standpoint. The film required a large amount of stage space. Though the Hollywood stages were larger, they were almost constantly occupied

case, that has to deal with the 'nuts and bolts' of the timing.

WATTS: Yes, basically, though under normal circumstances the first thing I would have to do as producer would be to go and raise money for the film. In this particular instance, I don't do that, it is a Lucasfilm production, and with George Lucas and Steven Spielberg's name on it, there wasn't too much trouble with financing. On this kind of film, one is an "employed" producer.

The next step, obviously, was the organization of the whole thing. Preproduction involved two trips



The English film industry was in a sort of doldrum period at that time and we were able to get the whole Elstree studio at one time—at a very advantageous price. Elstree had changed format and needed to show it could handle a big picture. It was mutually beneficial. And, also, the availability of technical talent was a consideration.

FF: In addition to the *Star Wars* films, you were employed for the first Indiana Jones film, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which also was shot, in part, at the Elstree facilities.

WATTS: I was associate producer on that film. It was a totally different kind of project than the *Star Wars* films but we were able to apply some of the 'newfound' technical expertise to that film as well.

FF: On the new Indiana Jones feature, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (hereafter *J&TOD*) you are the producer, the Tella, in this

around the world to scout locations with production designer Elliot Scott. The filming itself began April 18th and finished, finally, on September 9th.

FF: That's a brisk pace.

WATTS: Well, yes, but we don't mess around with these films. There is one thing about Lucasfilm: the intention, always, is to put all the money on the screen.

FF: You had completed *Return of the Jedi* just before beginning on *J&TOD*. Did you find it to be blessedly uncomplicated after the demands of *Jedi*?

WATTS: Well, yes and no. Each movie, as an individual entity, has its own complexities. The most difficult aspect of *J&TOD* was our two locations, Macau and Sri Lanka. They were extremely far-flung, which meant that visiting those locations took a lot of time. *Jedi*'s locations were all in the U.S.,

when it is, in effect, like being on one's own domain. *Raiders*, too, the location was Tunisia, which was only two and a half hours from London. You could fly down to see that things were going well in preparation with little difficulty.

But Sri Lanka was an eighteen-hour flight, then a dreadful drive to get to where we were set up. With Macau, of course, you had to fly to Hong Kong then take a hydrofoil boat to Macau, a long, long way from home base in London.

FF: And all the personnel and equipment?

WATTS: We were able to pick up a lot of equipment in Hong Kong; they have a reasonably active film industry, but in Sri Lanka almost everything had to be sent from England. Including the catering truck and refrigeration units. One of the most important aspects, when you're shooting overseas, is catering. You spend a lot of money to import caterers, cooks and even foodstuffs—there's a mobile kitchen truck, brought in by ship from the U.K. or U.S., depending on the location. This is vitally important, because sickness among the crew can wipe you (the production) out.

Although you want to give the crew good food, which is one side of the coin, you are also buying insurance for the production against sickness. (The movie I did in Afghanistan—a very low budget film—that was the one thing I spent money on. We brought in a catering truck from England, overland. There was no sea route, no train route and only one plane a week. It's vital. Even with that precaution, there were times in Afghanistan when I was only working with fifty percent of the crew.)

FF: There was some problem in Tunisia, on the first film, with illness during location shooting there.

WATTS: The fault really lay there with ourselves and circumstances, not with Tunisia. The time frame for shooting had pushed the production into that location at the hottest time of the year. It's very difficult not to get sick when the temperature is 130° in the shade. When we used that location for *Star Wars*, we were there in March/April when the temperature is moderate, in the 70s. We didn't have any sickness.

FF: Were you doubly careful in Sri Lanka because of your earlier experiences?

WATTS: You're always careful, in any country, but particularly in the Third World countries—the standard of hygiene may not be quite the same as one is used to.

FF: In Sri Lanka, the principal action took place around a huge chieftain, an *ayias*, the *porge*. Was that something you and Elliot Scott discovered, or did you remember it from some prior scout?

WATTS: Scotty and I went first to India and spent several weeks scouting the country and we found every location called for in India

with the exception of the gorge. One of the problems we also encountered, in the Himalayas in the north of India, was that the areas we were looking at were likely to be covered in snow during our preparation period. We found everything else, more or less, but it was very spread out. One thing here, then five hundred miles to the next area and so on. When we scouted Sri Lanka, not only did we find this gorge, we found it in a place where our other location needs would be accessible from one base, which was Kandy, the second principal city after Colombo, the capital.

Then we had to make the bridge. We were fortunate. Nearby the gorge there was a dam under construction which was being built by a British company, Balfour, Beatty and Nuttal. They were about two-thirds of the way through the project and had a lot of highly skilled engineers and equipment right on the site. They actually did the engineering side of getting our bridge put up.

FF: Were they eager to assist?
WATTS: They were most helpful from the word go. We had found the gorge initially by helicopter. To look from the road, you can literally miss something that's over the next hill.

FF: Was the bridge left up for the locals?

WATTS: No, everything was removed afterwards. That, generally speaking, is contractually necessary when you put up any form of 'set piece.' A thing like that rope bridge and the access to it, because of the dangerous nature of the situation, I would have had it all taken away, regardless. I wouldn't have wanted to think of any kids playing on it or even in the vicinity of it after we'd gone because it was extremely dangerous.

FF: I'm not sure I'd have walked across it on a dare.

WATTS: Oh, I didn't mind it so much.

FF: You crossed it?

WATTS: Yes, I walked across even before the sides were on it.

FF: You must not have acrophobia.
WATTS: Oh, yes, I do! I get a feeling of vertigo, to a point, but the bridge didn't worry me. I know that it had been put up by first rate engineers. And really, if the crew is going to work on it, you have to show them that you're also willing.

FF: Frank Marshall mentioned that the 'life raft scene' will be one to watch for in this film. Can you tell us anything about that?

WATTS: I don't think I should elaborate too much. It is quite dramatic

they'll go unnoticed—if they don't see them, it means they are totally successful. They become integral, natural, not something recognizable as "laid in" afterwards.

FF: Did the overlays and other effects require any innovations or were there techniques available?

WATTS: There was a certain amount of innovation on this movie. I don't think there has been any Lucasfilm production yet where we don't do something that hasn't been done before.

FF: Can you mention anything specific?

WATTS: It would be difficult. Let's

fully, you'll certainly see one "fun-joke" for the fans. But, I won't tell you where it is.

FF: Another U.S. location was the American river near Placerville in Northern California. What was that utilized for?

WATTS: We did part of the life raft sequence on that river. I can tell you one thing about that sequence—it was shot on three different continents, Europe, Asia and the U.S.

FF: Could you comment on why Lucas and Spielberg seem to attract the finest technical talent in the industry? Oscar/award winning craftsmen from diverse areas of the industry have congregated at Lucasfilm.

WATTS: Any production company that produces films which get the kind of exposure that Lucasfilm has gathered is obviously attractive to any artist. After all, the technicians on a film are creative as well as being technically skilled. Secondly, it is a good company to work for—these are not financial considerations I'm talking about—it is a company that fosters talent, brings talent out, gives creative people the chance to create.

Steven, as a director, is a most exhilarating person to work for. I mean, he's magic, an instinctive director. This, to any creative, technical person, is a wonderful quality. Both he and George have an enormous enthusiasm, an appreciation of good technical ability and creativity. Put them together and you have a creative "force" second to none which is extremely attractive to other creative people. Given their amalgamation of creative talent and skill to the big talents of these other individuals, and I think you generate something that is electric, that is exciting.

FF: And rare.

WATTS: And rare. I feel it. These are the kinds of movies you can work on twenty hours a day and not feel tired of it because the exhilaration carries you through.

FF: You seem to be saying there's no one else you'd rather work for.

WATTS: No, there isn't—I'd like to be as forth as good as they are. We all aspire to excellence.

FF: Now that this project is almost complete, could you tell us what your plans are?

WATTS: Well, I have a lot of roles in the fire, as Lucas is not planning to make a film in the immediate future. I'm going to go off on my own to try and do something, though it will be a little smaller, perhaps more about people and less about action. Not that I'm tired of the action films but everybody needs a slight change of pace.

But the last nine years have been a marvelous experience. I feel as if I'd pulled the handle on the dollar slot machine in the main casino at the MGM Grand and up came the four bars, the jackpot, in the form of that first job with Star Wars.

It's been that good.



—I don't think the audience should get any preconceived ideas about it. Suffice to say what Frank says is correct, it is all actual, real, it is not done with miniatures. It's quite a heartstopper.

FF: Quite a lot of the film consists of interiors (of 18 weeks shooting, only four were on location). Were there any particular problems you ran into with interior filming? Any sets that are noteworthy, like the Web of Souls in the first film?

WATTS: We built a lot of big sets. Everything worked really very well. They were highly intricate, most of the sets had built in mechanical effects within the construction of the set.

FF: Rather than using an insert or other photographic effect?

WATTS: Yes, although there are certain overlays in some of the scenes. One always hopes that when the audience sees the film,

say there is a lot of intricate work in the sets which may be apparent. The sets are extremely atmospheric and very complicated but they worked very well.

FF: There was some additional location work in the U.S., at Hamilton Air Force Base, but which only involved a day or two.

WATTS: Hamilton was a planned, specific location. We dressed the base to be Shanghai Airport, 1935.

FF: Did it require locating some vintage aircraft?

WATTS: We had one specific "picture" plane, a late 20's Ford Trimotor.

FF: Any funny letters on the tail? (The tailplane featured in Raiders sported the identification markings CB-CPO, a tip of the hat to another Lucas epic).

WATTS: There are letters, but they are there for a reason—not an in-joke at all, though if you look care-



KATE CAPSHAW

Harrison Ford poses on the 350 ft. rope and steel bridge which spans "The Gorge" in Sri Lanka.

Spielberg and Dante Bring Home Some Little Terrors

GREMLINS

Article by PRESLEY REESE

Traditionally, Steven Spielberg film projects have become celebrated by genre fans for their stylized "sense of wonder" and by critics for their entertaining blend of humor, suspense and believable human behavior. Spielberg's latest excursion into the outre, *Gremlins*, is no exception.

Directed by fast-rising filmmaker Joe Dante, *Gremlins* begins casually enough as a young man's father, an inventor—one of the less successful but more individualistic citizens of the peaceful midwestern community, Kingston Falls—returns from the Orient with a highly unusual present for his son. At first Billy is delighted with his extraordinary new pet, but soon life for Billy and the residents of Kingston Falls takes a quantum leap into the fantastic when the boy inadvertently breaks the explicit "rules" for the care and feeding of his little friend.

"Keep them away from water. Don't ever get them wet. Keep them out of light. They hate bright light. . . It will kill them. But the most important thing, the thing you must never forget: no matter how much they cry, no matter how much they beg, never never feed them after midnight!"

Although the instructions are simple and clear, the consequences of these broken rules multiply at an alarming rate, compounding Billy's problems in ways that range from the hilarious to the



harrowing, and setting off a chain of events that build to an explosive, suspenseful climax.

With his unique sense of direction Dante has once again blended the awesome with the amusing.

The humor in *Gremlins* has a definite edge—one which illuminates the small-town landscape with wit and insight into the duality of nature. It's a quality I've always liked in movies," comments Dante whose critically-praised segment of *Twilight Zone—The Movie* ("It's A Good Life,") also revealed subtle undercurrents of dark humor beneath the story's surface.

The charm and innocence of Chris Columbus' original script captivated director Dante on first reading, particularly the aspect of the friendship that springs up be-

tween Billy and the mogwai he affectionately names "Gizmo." What a marvelous world it would be if mogwais were like Gizmo. But in reproduction, mogwais unfortunately follow no predictable pattern, so there can be no guarantee—except for a guaranteed shock when the ultimate warning is violated.

The idea for *Gremlins* was born in a loft in Manhattan's garment district that was home to screenwriter Columbus after graduation from the New York University Film School.

"By day, it was pleasant enough," recalls Columbus, "but at night, what sounded like a piston of mice would come out, and to hear them skittering around in the blackness was really creepy. I

thought to myself, 'This is more frightening than a pack of German shepherds.'"

Gremlins is not set in New York City, however, but in a mid-Western town very much like one in Ohio that Columbus remembered passing through as a youngster:

"My family lived in Warren, Ohio, but we had relatives in Cleveland, and we would drive through Chagrin Falls on the way to visit them," the writer recalls. "Warren was a flat, gray, industrial town, but Chagrin Falls was like something you'd see in a Capra movie—especially at Christmas when holiday lights were hanging and there was snow everywhere."

"Audiences," reasons Dante, "will hopefully feel a kind of affectionate familiarity with the town we've created in the film. Kingston Falls has the look of a place you've seen before, populated with individuals you've known. One reason we elected to turn our little mischief-makers loose in such an idyllic community is because the setting suggests the amiable atmosphere of a table."

"More important than the glitter of show business 'names,'" adds Dante, "was finding a cast that projected the sense of faded reality we wanted for our film."

Zach Galligan, a 19-year-old native New Yorker with a personable appeal, was selected from hundreds interviewed for the role of Billy.

"Billy is a maverick in Kingston Falls, a town where most of the



Photos: Above center, director Joe Dante lines up a shot. Bottom, left to right, Rand Feltzer (Hoyt Axton) and his son Billy (Zach Galligan) laugh at the consequences of end of his new "inventions." Mr. Feltzer purchases a meal from Kaya Lulu in a Chinatown sushi shop.

people have come to accept their roles in life," notes Dante. "Yet, if you go too far toward eccentricity, the audience may think the character is 'weird.' Billy had to be someone moviegoers could believe in, a person younger audiences could accept as one of themselves."

"Billy" observed the young Gattin, "is not so much 'weird' as he is 'unassuming.' During the film, the character evolves from a person who is reluctant to take control—to someone who realizes that he has to take charge."

Others in the cast include Phoebe Cates, who plays Billy's friend, Kate Berninger; Hoyt Axton who lends his warm personal style and off-beat humor to the role of Billy's father, inventor Rand Peltzer; Polly Holliday ("Flo" from the TV sitcom *Alcoa*) is Mrs. Deagle, the most intimidating citizen in Kingston Falls; Frances Lee McCain plays Lynn Peltzer, the patient, supportive matriarch of the Peltzer household, and among other notable character actors: Scott Brady, Keye Luke, Harry Carey Jr. and (of course) Dick Smith.

The mogwais in the film presented a rather unusual "casting" problem on which Dante and Finnell consulted with special effects man Chris Walas (formerly of ILM) who has previously galvanized audiences with his own special brand of movie magic in films such as *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* and *Dragonflyer*.

"Chris phoned me after reading the script," recalls producer Mike Finnell. "He told me, 'Of course it's impossible to do. So let's do it!'"

"It shaped up as a very ambitious movie," adds Walas, "but I also saw it as an opportunity to have fun. I liked the far-out, mischievous qualities of the characters I was helping to bring to life. But what counted even more was the fact that Joe Dante was directing. He is exceptionally qualified in working with effects and, as a director, has a real understanding of what it takes to set these things up and make them work on film."

It took Walas seven months to



come up with the right design for the "mogwai," the smaller of the two types of creatures in *Gremlins*. The larger breed met the filmmakers' requirements almost immediately. The most difficult part of this ambitious undertaking, however, was the animation of his foam-latex creations.

"We used a little bit of everything," explained Walas, describing the techniques employed in manipulating these tiny actors. "We combined systems of cable and radio controls with hand puppeting, rod puppeting and standard puppetry techniques that have been around for centuries—though we obviously had the benefit of today's sophisticated technology."

Walas credits his talented crew with developing distinct personali-

ties for the scores of performing puppets. "When you have a bunch of operators, you find out that one can work a specific function with just a little bit of an edge that no one else has," he added. "Someone can get the eyes to dart off just at the right second, someone else has got just the right tilt of the head. When you can see the character evolving, that's when it really gets exciting."

Music for *Gremlins* is the work of Academy Award-winning composer Jerry Goldsmith who has created a score which captures both the mischievous humor and mounting suspense. Steven Spielberg, Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy served as executive producers for the Warner Bros. release. ■

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STAR TREK 3

(Continued from page 27)

which all the characters have to concern themselves with the fact that he is gone. They have to try to do something about it. I guess what I'm saying is, although he isn't there, he is.

FF: His absence is, in effect, his presence.

NIMOY: His absence is what the story is about, so in that sense he is there. It's not as though we are doing a story that totally ignores the character as if he never existed.

FF: A repeated criticism of the earlier films is that neither of them devalued or expended the roles of the rest of the Star Trek ensemble. Some cast members have been quite vocal about that situation. Did you try to use cast members like George Takei, Jimmy Doohan, Walter Koenig, and Nichelle Nichols more fully than the preceding films?

NIMOY: It's not a question of the number of lines they had to speak, or the number of pages of script that they're in. It's a question of whether or not these characters can be brought to life as people in moments here and there that help you to understand who they are and help you to enjoy them.

FF: Even if they're not long moments, as long as they are good moments.

NIMOY: Exactly. I have always felt that was true of the Spock character, it wasn't how much he's in the picture, it was what he does when he's there. I think the same is true of all these other characters. I think we've been able to capture that. The picture, I feel, has a lot of scope, a lot of adventure, and involves all of the people very successfully.

FF: Did Harve Bennett do the writing exclusively?

NIMOY: There was a lot of input from me and from the studio, but Harve did the writing.

FF: Did he give you a good script?

NIMOY: I think we got a terrific script. It's a fun story, plenty of humor, a good adventure and a very personal story.

FF: Did it undergo very much changing?

NIMOY: Any movie script that undergoes a period of development over a year and a half goes through many, many changes, but not an extraordinary amount of changes. You have a story, then a first draft, a second draft, a polish or several polishes, a touch up here and there. It went through a very normal process.

FF: Granting the possibility that Spock may stay dead for the entire story, how do you feel about the prospect of Star Trek continuing without him? A couple of well-known writers have suggested that the best thing anyone could do for Star Trek is kill off Kirk and McCoy as well, letting the stories develop in a totally different direction.

NIMOY: Well, that would certainly be daring, though I'm not sure it would be successful.

Whether Star Trek can survive the loss of Spock's character is a valid question, but I think the person that writes Star Trek IV will have to answer that. I also think the answer may come when we get an audience response from Star Trek III. The possible direction, the possible "futures" are set up again as they were in *Star Trek II*. The end of *Star Trek* suggested there was something yet to come and I hope that *Star Trek III* does the same thing.

I think it's a complete picture in and of itself, but at the same time we have a very imaginative audience, and I have found out on the street that a lot of people are obviously curious about what's going to happen in this picture, but everyone seems to have ideas about what could happen. I think we'll find that same reaction after this picture is released, people will

have ideas about what has to happen next.

FF: You are still involved in the post production at this time. What remains to be done?

NIMOY: We're just putting the fine touches on the film now. We're having a test preview, with a soundtrack of the music we've just finished scoring, though some of the sound effects won't be quite what will be in the finished film. It will give us a chance to play the story out in front of a test audience to get a sense of whether all the things that we think are working, that we think are exciting, that we think are funny—whether they are to an audience. Assuming that that goes smoothly, we will then go into our final dubbing process which will take four or five weeks, all of March and into April. Then, around the middle of April, we'll start making prints. At that point, the picture is finished. We'll turn it over to the labs and say O.K., make about 1300 prints of the.

We are planning for 70 to 100 70mm prints, dependent on how many can be turned out before the release date. A lab can only make about 20 70mm prints a day so the number relies on how soon the picture is actually complete.

We are also involved in a program set up by Lucasfilm to improve the sound systems in theaters around the country. Paramount has invested \$300,000 in the program, the goal being to get the full value of the sound we're going to have in the picture.

The theaters are being prepared for two films, *Star Trek III* and *Indiana Jones and The Temple of Doom*. There will be a team of sixteen to nineteen consulting technicians paid by Paramount, trained by Lucasfilm. They'll go out to the theaters in advance to check out the sound systems and make whatever adjustments are necessary so the audience can hear the sounds that we put into the soundtrack.

Paramount has taken a good step with this. They have been saying to exhibitors for years make the theaters better, make them more attractive, make the picture

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Paramount has taken a good step with this. They have been saying to exhibitors for years make the theaters better, make them more attractive, make the picture

more active in other areas as well. One of his projects that seems to particularly delight him is the cable program *Lights! Camera! Action!*, an hourly program showcasing various aspects of movie making. Though Nickelodeon, the all-children programming channel, sponsors the program, Nimoy's involvement as host seems to appeal to a wide viewership. Nimoy detailed his interest and involvement in the program, as well as his plans for the future as our interview drew to a close.

NIMOY: The idea for *Lights! Camera! Action!* was fully developed when the producers brought it to me and asked if I'd like to participate. I think it's a very well executed show. I enjoy very much doing it. It gives me a chance to step out of the austere, reserved personality that so many people identify me with.

I love doing the interviews with the people they bring on the show, and the production company does a terrific job getting the behind the scenes footage from the making of some very exciting and interesting films. I think it's a great way to do a movie appreciation course. It's very informative and it talks to young people in a very adult way, without being condescending. I'm very pleased with the reaction we've gotten—we're going to make some more of those, possibly sometime in June.

FF: You mentioned it allows you an opportunity to step out of a stereotype. Does that concern you?

NIMOY: No, it's just that I don't get a lot of opportunity to do it. I don't really concern myself with that as long as I have interesting work to do, and I certainly have my share of that.

FF: Ideally, would you just as soon walk into another directing project?

NIMOY: Oh, sure, or an acting job, it doesn't matter to me. I want to direct some more but I would take an acting job if it were challenging enough, sure. I have not given up acting.

FF: But you wouldn't turn down an offer to direct?

NIMOY: No.

FF: What's your next step?

NIMOY: I don't really know. I've been on this project for a long time, when the picture opens it will be two years since we started talking about it, it will be a year and a half that I'd been involved with it—that was the point when Harve started writing it and we were talking story ideas. It will be a year in April that I actually came on the job as a salaried director on a project. So there has been a big investment here [of time] which I've enjoyed thoroughly. I don't have a set plan in mind, about where I want to go next, or intend to do next. I've been reading material everyday, scripts submitted from various projects at Paramount and other studios and when something hits me that makes me say "I'd like to spend the next two years of my time on this," then I'll do it.

THE FUTURE
Despite his involvement in the time-consuming process of production on *Star Trek III*, Nimoy has



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THE LAST STARFIGHTER

Article by P.R. DUNRITE

VIDEO ARCADE GAMES BECOME TESTING UNITS FOR INTERGALACTIC ARMY RECRUITERS FROM SPACE

Now is the time for all good gamers to exercise their Sense of Wonder.

First, imagine that a certain popular video arcade game, with its high-tech audio and video programs, is really a secret training device upon which the space wars of tomorrow are played out. Then imagine that this "video game" has been placed on earth by military recruiters from distant planets, whose sole intention is to search out and enlist the most competitive players and to prepare them for the realities of intergalactic warfare, to take them one step beyond "the game" and to train them to become the Starfighters and Space Warriors of our future. Only that future is already here and exists right now in a distant corner of the galaxy!

"The Last Starfighter takes this premise," explains Gary Adelson, the film's producer, "and develops it into a total cinematic experience of fun-filled, light-hearted adventure. It conceptualizes the ultimate dream of anyone intensely involved with video games: to suddenly

be whisked off to worlds beyond our own and to become a real space hero. This fantasy becomes a reality for Alex, the teen-age hero of *The Last Starfighter*.

"But what intrigued us the most about the script," adds Adelson, "was that it combined action and good times with a certain human element: Alex's fear of yearning to return home, much like Dorothy did in *The Wizard Of Oz*."

THE STORY

Millions of light years ago, a great frontier was constructed in the universe to protect the Star League of Planets from its enemy, the Ko-Dan. Zur, a former Star League member, has defected and given the secret "key" of the frontier to the Ko-Dan. Starfighters from throughout the galaxy are now needed to defend the peace. Recruiters have been sent out to enlist new Starfighters from other planets.

The Last Starfighter begins when Alex (Lance Guest), an eighteen-year-old earthling (with an extraordinary talent for video game wizardry), en-





Above, Alex is escorted into the council chambers of the Star League of Planets

counters the persuasive and charming, but rather unscrupulous alien scalawag, Centauri (Robert Preston), who has dropped down to earth to fill his quota of recruits.

Unknown to Alex, the game he has come to master with super proficiency, *Starfighter*, was actually placed on this planet by Centauri for training purposes. Destined for Las Vegas, the machine was accidentally placed in Alex's remote trailer

park. As a choice candidate, none-the-less, Alex is quickly whisked into the regions of outer space by Centauri and his amazing "auto." There he joins legions of other Starfighters from planets throughout the Star League who are also fighting the war to save the universe.

"I think you could summarize *The Last Starfighter* as an electronic, science-fiction fairy-tale," suggests co-producer



At left, Alex practices in the Starfighter simulator. At right Centauri poses with a female Starfighter with an unusual hairline.

Edward Denault: "A kind of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table in space. The plot, characters and action all blend together to create a wonderful world of technical magic and fantastic escapism."

"In many ways," adds screenwriter Jonathan Betuel, "I envisioned Alex's trip into space as similar to Alice's journey into Wonderland, only in our situation, Wonderland would be the 'extraterrestrial' White Rabbit."

PRE-PRODUCTION

The first step taken by Adelson and Denault in bringing *The Last Starfighter* to the screen was the careful selection of a director.

"We wanted an up-and-coming talent," remarks Denault. "Somebody who had a high level of enthusiasm and the right sensibilities for directing this kind of picture. We screened numerous films, but it wasn't until we saw a film called *Tag* that we knew we had our director, Nick Castle, Jr."

Adelson adds, "Nick's work had all the ingredients we were looking for. *Tag* was very visual and funny, the humor was just right and it had a uniquely interesting concept. When Nick came back to us after reading the script for *The Last Starfighter*, his insights for translating the project to the screen were astonishing. From that point on, his input was magic."

Castle, son of the famed motion picture choreographer, Nick Castle, Sr., modestly remarks, "It was teamwork from the start. Together, we worked for an entire year, planning the production before the cameras ever started rolling. And one of the key people during that period was our Production Designer, Ron Cobb. He began conceptualizing the project even before most of us. He also worked closely with Jonathan Betuel, translating the script into visual images, designs for the aliens, space craft, command centers and 'the elements' of the universe, components which would be added later to the film through Digital Productions' computer simulation."

Ron Cobb, who is noted for the aliens he created for the original *Star Wars* film and his production designs for other films such as *Alien* and *Conan the Barbarian*, adds, "The screenplay itself offered me the opportunity of taking many avenues. I drew on reality for the design of this film, rather than the endless extension of old science fiction molds. This, so to speak, allowed me to create some truly novel ideas. But the real challenge was in designing sequence for the computer simulation. Never before have I had the luxury of working within such three-dimensional creativity."

According to Digital's President and associate producer of *The Last Starfighter* John Whitney, Jr., "We're presenting a new level of realism never before achieved in computer-generated special effects for motion pictures. Utilizing our Gray Super Computer and

other sophisticated software, we are producing simulated scenes which can truly suspend the audience's ability to recognize the difference between the live action and photographically realistic computer simulation."

"After seeing Digital's test footage," adds Nick Castle, "I gained an incredible perspective on how different many of the scenes could be shot devoid of the standard photographic format. It was revolutionary!"



Veteran character actor Dan O'Herlihy's husky voice is about all that will be recognizable beneath the lizard-like makeup of his alien character, Grip.

THE ACTORS

"With the pre-production elements in hand for *The Last Starfighter*," continues Castle, "our next concern was the casting. It was vitally important we had the right people to create a believable aura of humanitarian elements for their characters. And at the same time, compliment Ron Cobb's visual designs."

Veteran actor Robert Preston, who immortalized the character of Prof. Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, was everyone's choice for the part of Centauri Preston, whose versatile acting career spans the last forty-five years, describes his reasons for accepting the role. "I was looking for a change of pace from my last pictures. What attracted me most about Centauri was his character—an outrageous con-man from outer space, an alien rascal in human disguise who relishes in his scalawagging and masquerading."

"I've never been in a picture of this genre before," continues Preston. "In fact, in one scene I even

get the chance to take off my human face and expose my alien being. But, you know, what really excites me most about *The Last Starfighter* is that it's given me the chance to play to an entirely different audience from any of my previous pictures."

For the roles of the young teenagers, Alex and Maggie, Nick Castle interviewed numerous hopefuls.

"It's somewhat ironic," points out Castle. "When I was assigned

being a hero isn't all that easy."

Castle then selected Catherine Mary Stewart, (a regular on the TV soap *The Days of Our Lives*) for the role of Maggie. Stewart describes her character as "a person very much in love with the guy next door. A real positive relationship. Even an inter-galactic war can't keep these two apart!"

Another key role in *The Last Starfighter* was that of Greg, Alex's Gun Star navigator. "We were elated," explained Castle, "when Dan O'Herlihy accepted. As a veteran of well over seventy films, including an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor for Robinson Crusoe, J. O'Herlihy comments, 'Greg is a delicious character—a humaned alien with an iguana look, sort of a cross between George Patton and a well-bred Englishman. And, in relation to Alex, he is as Merlin was to King Arthur. I'm completely riveted throughout the film as the lizard type creature and the only thing recognizable about me is my voice.'"

ART DIRECTION & SPECIAL EFFECTS

In what the film industry would call a rather odd turn-about, noted Production Designer Jim Bassell, whose credits include the design for *E.T.*, was signed as Art Director to execute Ron Cobb's set designs.

"I've always been impressed with Ron's work," remarked Bassell, "and, I was intrigued by the directions he was taking, especially in the area of computer simulation. This was an opportunity I couldn't and didn't want to pass on. Rarely do two designers ever get the chance to interact as such."

Cobb adds, "Not only did I want Jim Bassell, but I needed him. We learned much from each other within a atmosphere of harmony, understanding and admiration. The result is best reflected in how the sets turned out, without any exaggeration, they surpassed my expectations. For this, I credit Jim Bassell."

To implement the other elements of his production design for *The Last Starfighter* Cobb selected make-up expert Terry Smith to bring his rough sketches of the aliens to life. Smith, whose credits include many film and television projects, received extensive training in sculpting, mold making and appliance application under the tutelage of veteran make-up artist John Chambers.

"We had an enormous amount of aliens to make, especially for the Star League assembly scene," explains Cobb. "And, most of our main characters required very specialized alien appearances. These appliances are not just simple rubber masks; they are complicated and complex mechanisms. If they are to have any semblance of reality there must be muscle, tendons, eye and mouth movement—whatever is required. Terry Smith is one of the few artists in this business with the talent and expertise to create such authenticity."

Bounding out Cobb's design needs were the costumes. "Again, I wanted to get away from that 'old science-fiction mold,'" states Cobb. "And I was adamant about having a very different and unique look for *The Last Starfighter*."

The renowned Robert Fletcher, a name synonymous with costume design on an international status for stage, film and television, was selected.

"His results were excellent, in fact, stunning," remarks Cobb. "Not only was Fletcher able to make the costumes, but he improved upon the initial design."

PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY

With the creation of the mystical sphere of galaxies and worlds beyond earth through the genius and artistry of motion picture technical innovation, *The Last Starfighter* entered another more down-to-earth phase: principal photography.

To insure the best possible quality, Nick Castle, Jr. signed King Baggot as Director of Photography.

"This is the most challenging picture I have ever photographed," admits Baggot. "In addition to filming the extensive special effects, there was also the process work to be integrated with the computer simulation scenes; the latter of which required precision lighting. Overall, our concern throughout was creating a unique, atmospheric look to this picture, one which would give the viewer a true sense of being in space."

"We filmed using Panavision's anamorphic process for wide screen presentation," continues Baggot. "This gave the picture an added dimension. And for certain of the special effects scenes, we used the VistaVision camera, a process that shoots horizontally, producing a double-the-size negative. The resulting image is impeccable."

On June 8, 1983, filming commenced on *The Last Starfighter* with the exteriors for the trailer park in California's Soladad Canyon. From there, the company moved to the M G M Studios where three elaborate sets were constructed: the Rylos hangar and landing tunnel and the Ko-Dan command ship. Also constructed was a huge mock-up of the Gun Star with a special rotating seat designed by Special Effects Supervisor, Kevin Plee.

With *The Last Starfighter* now in post-production, producer Gary Adelson summed it all up. "It has been an extremely rewarding experience being involved with this project. From inception to the point it has now reached, the process was one of creative ideas constantly blending together."

Co-Producer Edward Denault also concludes proudly. "We have something very special with *The Last Starfighter*. It has an incredible magic all its own." *The Last Starfighter* is scheduled for release by Lorimar/Universal on June 22.



Photos: Top down, Centuri's "flying" car pulls up outside the Sterile Trailer Court where Alex's lives. Centuri collects his bounty for bringing in another *Starfighter* recruit. Centuri defends Alex from a Ko-Dan "hit squad."

The image shows the cover of a comic book titled 'FANTASTIC FOUR: THE END OF THE WORLD'. The title is in large, bold, stylized letters at the top. Below the title, there is a subtitle 'THE END OF THE WORLD' in a smaller font. The central illustration depicts the four members of the Fantastic Four (Mr. Fantastic, Invisible Girl, Human Torch, and Thing) in a dynamic pose, seemingly flying or falling through a dark, stormy sky. The cover also features various logos and text, including 'MARVEL COMICS' and 'Ages 10+'.

ALIEN DIRECTOR RIDLEY SCOTT Interview
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